









Major cities may take back control of education. Caroline Haydon reports

## 'Big nine' to regain powers?

Major cities which lost responsibility for education when local government was reorganised in 1974 may have their powers restored. But the return would not be made automatically—each case would be decided on its merits.

The surprise announcement came in a written Commons answer from Mr Peter Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment, just before the House rose for the summer recess.

He emphasized that the Government decision to press ahead with the transfer of some powers from non-metropolitan counties to the cities—including social services and planning as well as education—was only in principle. Further discussions will be held before the introduction of any new legislation.

The "Big Nine", as the cities involved in the plan are known, are Bristol, Hull, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stoke, Southampton, Portsmouth and Plymouth. They have been lobbying for a return of their lost powers for at least two years.

The Local Government Act of 1972 downgraded them to the status of district councils and turned over the control of education within their boundaries to the counties of Avon, Humberside, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Hampshire (Southampton and Portsmouth) and Devon respectively.

Although six of the nine cities are now Conservative-controlled, any changeover could have a long-term effect on education policy since the cities are traditional Labour strongholds. The rural county areas are overwhelmingly Conservative.

A limited reshuffle has been mooted for some time in Labour Party circles and the party's national executive announced its support for the nine earlier this summer.

But it has always been understood that education was not such a strong candidate for transfer as social services, which it is more widely agreed might need to be run locally to link up with housing, already under district council control.

And the Department of Education and Science has been reluctant to sever another organizational shake-up so soon after the last one.

Mr Shore said that responsible education authorities needed to be substantial in size in order to be able to provide an adequate service, and most of the non-metropolitan district councils were much too small.

Bristol is by far the largest of the nine with a population of around 420,000. Next-largest is Leicester with 290,000. None has a population of under 200,000.

In each case the decision to transfer the control of services would be taken in the light of all the local circumstances, including the impact on services in the remaining county areas, said Mr Shore.

It would also depend on the decision of the district council itself. So far only Southampton has dissociated itself from the others, saying that it is not in favour of any changes other than "limited" ones in the fields of transport and planning.

Chairman of the Big Nine and leader of the Conservative-controlled Leicester City Council, Mr Michael Cufflin this week welcomed Mr Shore's statement.

"The present system has worked least well in places like Leicester where there is a large conurbation in the middle of a predominantly rural county", he said. The solution to various problems was clearly very different in each case.

He added that the cities would be trying to keep the costs of administration down and there would be no reason for the changeover to

produce the same "explosion in bureaucracy" as 1974.

The Association of County Councils (ACC) has condemned the proposal as expensive and unnecessary. Mr Gordon Cunningham, the association's education officer, said this week "What local authorities need now is a period of stability."

"To tear up the present system would suggest something of a disregard for the interests of the very people we are supposed to serve."

He doubted whether smaller authorities could offer the same specialist yet comprehensive advisory services as larger ones. The ACC has also said publicly that any further reorganization is likely to fuel public discontent with government at every level.

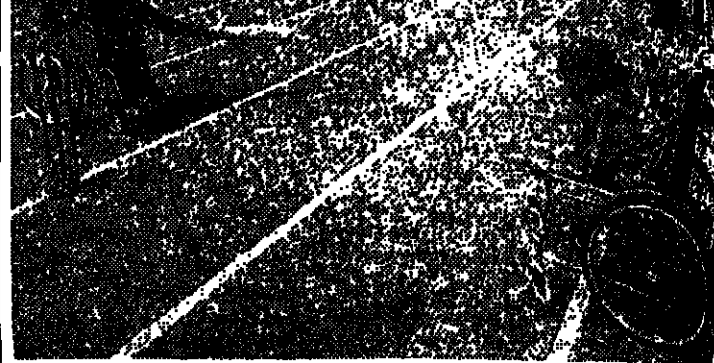
Other local government associations were this week maintaining a diplomatic silence about the return of education powers. The Association of District Councils (ADC) "warmly welcomed" plans to transfer social services and planning functions but did not mention education.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) merely commented that it was opposed to any further large-scale reorganization of local government.

Some of the Big Nine, however, indicated that they feel more closely allied to the large metropolitan authorities in the AMA than the smaller, rural district councils in the ADC.

Present AMA rules would not allow them to apply for membership, but it is not thought likely they would be left knocking at the door for long.

A "second league" of smaller district councils, including Norwich (population 121,000) and York (102,000), have also expressed an interest in claiming control over education, but it was clear from Mr Shore's statement that present plans concern only the nine cities.



Children at the Eru-Delyn School for the physically handicapped, South Wales, celebrated the end of term with a series of house cricket matches. The children also go shooting, sailing and swimming, and enjoy the use of a purpose-built athletic track, the first of its kind in the country.

## YOP girl has no right to appeal against sacking

by Tim Albert

Complaints are being raised about a 17-year-old girl who has lost her job on the Youth Opportunities Programme. What is upsetting people is that she does not have the same rights of appeal as other workers under employment protection legislation.

Her case has been taken up by the local MP, the Manpower Services Commission and the area office of the National Union of Public Employees.

"Young people on Youth Opportunities Programmes do not have the rights open to other employees," says John Coleman, a worker at the centre. "In cases of dispute things seem weighted against them."

Ann Griffiths left school at Easter. In the middle of June she started on a work experience scheme at Staincliffe Hospital, Dewsbury. Her job, she told the centre, consisted of washing and drying crockery (although the hospital says she was on a training programme and other duties would have followed).

Things did not go well. Ann says she was told off for not doing her job properly. She had a "heated encounter" with the hospital catering manager. Ann received further warnings, and a month after she started work was sent home on full allowance.

The decision was confirmed by the Manpower Services Commission, now at home, without her £19.50 allowance, but waiting to see if she can be found a position elsewhere under the scheme.

In his letter, John Coleman raises the question of whether there was adequate machinery to ensure she was treated fairly. It would appear that under the scheme, the only right of appeal against suspension is to the MSC whose reliance on the "goodwill" of employers (sponsors) makes them less than an impartial arbiter in the last analysis they appear to have no power to force employers to continue to allow a young person to remain in work.

In the case of Ann Griffiths, she was not approached by the MSC until after she had been suspended. "Surely at an earlier stage I would have been fair to both her and the hospital to get all points together for a discussion. Ann's progress (or lack of it), but Ann and her mother, rightly or wrongly, feel that they have no say in the way authorities coordinate their 16 to 19 provision or the mathematics attainment tests that authorities such as Coventry have introduced for school leavers to ensure local employment."

The questionnaire contains 50 questions on authorities' efforts to develop the curriculum and to achieve balance and breadth in it. Some questions refer to specific subject areas and to the transition between school, college and the preparation for working life.

But it is difficult to see how much hard information can come from the sort of replies received by the DES. They show that many of the questions have been interpreted differently and the answers often amount more to anonymous statements of belief than of practice.

This is illustrated to some extent by the answers to the question "What are the most important factors in the curriculum?" "What curriculum elements should be included in the curriculum?" and "What curriculum elements should be excluded from the curriculum?"

The outer London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is "relying upon the professional judgement and discretion of head teachers."

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How the I.e.a.s., amid suspicions about central interference, have been answering the government questionnaire on the curriculum

The Government's review of the curriculum arrangements of local authorities is unlikely to produce any startling conclusions. The general nature of the questions, the variety, and in some cases, the honesty of many of the answers has been noted.

It still remains to be seen whether the exercise has simply offered a chance to compare authorities, as the Department of Education and Science claims, or been an attempt to influence local policies, as the National Union of Teachers has always said it was.

The department plans to have the 500 or so answers summarized by next year, though this will be no easy task. It will no doubt be able to assert fairly conclusively that authorities rely on unspecified numbers of advisers and inspectors and in-service training courses to develop various parts of the curriculum, not least because those advisers will have provided many of the answers to the questionnaire.

Interesting facts never before collected centrally may also come to light—for example, information about the way authorities coordinate their 16 to 19 provision or the mathematics attainment tests that authorities such as Coventry have introduced for school leavers to ensure local employment.

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## Dear big brother...

Kingston upon Thames has decided not to take part in the Government's review of the curriculum, announced in the Green Paper which followed the Great Debate on education. And South Glamorgan has only done so with some reluctance.

But there seems to have been little response to the National Union of Teachers' call to boycott the questionnaire: Kingston's decision not to cooperate is being seen as politically motivated. The Tory-controlled outer London borough is also at odds with the Government over its plans for secondary reorganization.

The chairman of the education committee, Mr Angelo Rumbold, denied that the authority had actually refused to answer the questionnaire. It just had other, more important things on its plate at the moment, she said.

There were some questions it would not have answered anyway. She regarded some of them as "an

impertinence" and "loaded". Some were about things the DES had no real need to know and "cut across local autonomy".

Mrs Rumbold said Kingston was very concerned about the sorts of issues raised in the questionnaire but getting something done about them had a higher priority than answering premature questions from the Department of Education and Science.

Though the deadline for replies set by the department was the end of June, only 78 of the 97 English authorities have so far replied. Thirteen others have said they will reply by October, after their education committees have had a chance to vet the answers. Six have yet to indicate that they will be answering.

Seven out of the eight Welsh authorities have replied and the last one is expected to do so soon.

When the Government's circular announcing the review was issued last November, the NUT wrote to

all chief education officers asking them not to complete the questionnaire because it was "interventionist"—designed to influence local policy rather than to elicit information.

The union wanted authorities instead to reply in the form of a general memorandum on the curriculum drawn up in consultation with teacher representatives. None of the replies received so far take this form, though South Glamorgan did send a covering letter with its answers protesting at the wording of some of the questions.

The county's director of education, Mr P. J. Adams, said this week: "We expressed considerable reservations about the format and wording. Some of the questions were a denial of the statements about partnership in earlier parts of the curriculum review circular. No single element in this partnership can be expected to put things right or to be responsible for the defects."

It is expected, however, that once the curriculum review and the results of HM inspectors' surveys of primary and secondary schooling, due out soon, are published, local authorities and schools will take the hint from the examples of good, bad or just common practice.

It is being said, for instance, that the circular issued last week to local authorities to set up committees to strengthen the links between school and industry, would have been unnecessary if the results of the curriculum review were already available.

It is, however, undoubtedly true that the curriculum review and the debate that spawned it has affected the way some authorities regard their role in controlling and developing the curriculum. Some have held special seminars and conferences for education committees to discuss the replies they should make to the questionnaire, and others, like Manchester, are using their replies as the basis for further discussions with teachers about what schools ought to be teaching.

The DES maintains that the Great Debate gave it a mandate to ask these sort of questions. The Green Paper in which the review was announced says the Minister cannot "abdicate from leadership on educational issues which have become a matter of lively public concern."

In their turn local

authorities must coordinate the curriculum and its development in their own areas.

The review was intended to enable the Secretary of State to assess how far the practice of local authorities meets national needs and will assist in the preparation of future educational plans.

This could, as the NUT fears, mean a reversal from the Government's earlier policy of giving guidance on the curriculum. But as things stand, the DES does not expect to be doing much of that, and emphasizes it would only do so after extensive consultation.

Originally it complained, "The circular and accompanying questionnaire provide evidence that the DES either fails to recognize and understand the division of responsibility for the curriculum or wishes to initiate a movement in the balance of 'each responsibility' away from the schools towards more control at national and local authority levels."

There was no requirement under the Education Act that education authorities should coordinate the curriculum, as the questionnaire implies. The Clwyd response justifies their concern, the NUT says.

The Education Secretary, Mrs Shirley Williams, denied that this was an attempt to block the curriculum. But she is clearly at odds with the union about the rights and duties of the Government and local authorities as far as the curriculum is concerned.

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## Major move back to engineering

by Bert Lodge

There will be a bigger increase in the number of university students graduating in engineering and technology over the next two years than in any other discipline, according to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services.

The overall number of first degree university graduates will rise from 55,800 in 1977 to 63,500 in 1980, excluding those qualifying in medicine, dentistry and veterinary studies. The number of first degrees validated by the Council for National Academic Awards will rise from 14,700 in 1977 to 18,800.

With the decline in numbers studying engineering during the early 1970s reversed, almost 10,000 are expected to leave universities with engineering degrees in 1980, compared with just over 8,000 in 1977.

For scientists too, the association forecasts a reversal of the recent downward trend in numbers but here the increase will be relatively small. Law will continue to provide the largest number of graduates in any single discipline but there are expected to be increases in students graduating in business, management, geography and economics.

Graduates will need to be adaptable in the range of careers they consider if they are to get a job but there are likely to be fewer graduates seeking jobs by the late 1980s because of the fall in the number of 18-year-olds after 1982.

The association remarks that only about 70 per cent of university engineers and 50 per cent of scientists and social scientists are available for employment in this country on graduating. The remainder are foreign students returning home or British students going on to further study.

The Graduate Labour Market 1977-1980, AGCAS, Occupational Advisory Service, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, £2.

It is being said, for instance, that the circular issued last week to local authorities to set up committees to strengthen the links between school and industry, would have been unnecessary if the results of the curriculum review were already available.





# Graft or craft?

Is life for an industrial apprentice as grim as many teachers seem to believe? Adam Hopkins reports from an electronic components factory in the north east of England

When it comes to training apprentices, Welwyn Electric Ltd in Redding, Northumberland, is probably a lucky company. Despite one or two scary years, electronics is basically a boom industry, working conditions are good, and the company's training officer, Sid Skippings, has been at it for 19 years. Ask him what gives him the greatest pleasure in his job and he replies, much as a teacher might, not with generalities but with a long list of individual successes.

"Well there was Tony Jenkins," he says. "The name is fictitious," he came here at 17 and for the first two years we sweated blood. He appeared to have nothing. I got to the point where we had virtually given up. But something went click in the last 18 months and he was runner up as the company's 'Apprentice of the Year'."

"Then there was a boy who began as a craft apprentice with literally no academic credentials. He came to us as a bit of a failure at school and he wound up with an honours degree. In fact, he only just missed his first."

"Yes, I have got a favourable impression from being here. And actually I get quite worked up about the way some people regard engineering. When I was at school it was never mentioned, even though it was there as a subject to do at that time was sociology or art. The trouble is, as you say, you are an engineer people think you are a nerd, a bit of a twit, in one hand and a bit of a rebel in the other. That's totally untrue these days. In the drawing office we do real design jobs, things that are actually going to be used in production. You can wonder round the factory and see things being used and that's quite satisfying, you know."

Traver Dixon, apprentice technician, aged 19.

Apprenticeships at Welwyn last four years as they do throughout the engineering industry, and in line with the requirements of the Engineering Industry Training Board. They range from "craft work" for which little is initially required beyond a steady character, a good grade three in maths, and manual dexterity, through commercial and laboratory openings to student apprenticeships for people who have passed 'A' levels.

All apprentices are involved in the work of a number of different departments. All do college work, either on day or block release, to the highest level they can achieve. It's necessary to keep their feet on the Welwyn "stream" to another. And the students are sent off with financial backing from the company on top of their ordinary grant, to do necessary shopping, travel, and a variety of technical disciplines.

What stands particularly out as a feature of Welwyn is the often stated and apparently genuine interest in the personal self-improvement of the youngsters. For the students there is a wide range of things to do, from going to the cinema to other companies in due course.

"Not all our successful apprentices may with the company for



A mechanical engineering apprentice checks resistors coming off the production line at Welwyn Electric Ltd.

life," says the recruitment booklet (designed, interestingly, by students at Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic; most of the pictures in it show apprentices with long hair, so the scandalization of some of the staid members of the company). "Many, after some years away," continues the booklet, "will come back into a more remunerative and responsible position, bringing with them welcome experience and a new approach perhaps to old problems. There is no suggestion that Welwyn wants to own a person body and soul."

Another of Welwyn's assets is the great enthusiasm of Dr Peter Kirby, the company's research director and the man ultimately in charge of the training of apprentices. Though an active visiting professor at the universities of Newcastle and Edinburgh, he has plenty of scathing things to say about the academic life and believes the pace and drive of an expanding industry. "There's an atmosphere of excitement and hurly-burly," he says. "People actually want what you are trying to produce."

As chairman of the manpower, training, and education working group of the Northern Economic Planning Council, Dr Kirby is involved in many of the broader school-and-work initiatives now developing in the North East of England. The key, he says, is motivation. "The majority who come out of school are not particularly motivated towards us, being rather than another. What we need are youngsters who are motivated at every level of development. In this company, when Sid Skippings talks about the good ones, he is not



Learning how to use a microcomputer

"You've got to think about what you're doing. It's good work, quite interesting. I wasn't interested in the mechanical side at all at school. But my elder brother had been through here and he said it was the best apprenticeship we'd got in this area. And day-release, it's good too. You feel you are better in yourself for something that'll be better in the future. I've passed my ONC and I've sat the BND, and I'm just waiting for the results now."

Ian Patrick, apprentice tool-maker, aged 21.

necessarily talking about ability, but about people's desire to make the most of what they have."

At Welwyn, the attempt to involve Dr Kirby's enthusiasm and Sid Skippings' care for the individual brings the apprentices into real work as interestingly as possible. At the most basic, first-year apprentices construct the toolboxes and personal mobile sets they will use thereafter. In the later years of apprenticeship they are often involved in seeking solutions to real technical problems. Original contributions are gratefully accepted. There is also a system of personal tutors by which senior management staff take one or two apprentices under their wing. The success of tutoring is highly variable but at best it seems to provide some kind of anchor. Tutors, being in a less formal relationship to the apprentice than the training officer, can also act as intermediaries for them.

My own conversations with a number of apprentices, chosen at random, suggested that attitudes



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were on the whole highly favourable. But one or two found parts of their work repetitious. And one or two seemed fairly apathetic. All management staff with whom I spoke agreed that apathy was the greater enemy.

"Hostility to industry gives you something to bite on," said Donald Brodie, a senior manufacturing engineer. "It's apathy that's the killer. You give an apathetic lad a job that has to be done by that night and he doesn't feel the urgency. It's just one of the things that are said to him."

But there was also some agreement that apathy was perceptibly on the wane, particularly among the more intelligent. It was as if the North East had been depressed so long, said Sid Skippings, that youngsters were coming to realize it was time to shift for themselves.

The case of apprentices who are reluctant to do a great number of jobs is, of course, at the far end of the spectrum from that of production-line operators who are hired to perform a single task. Here much of the work looked to a visiting eye as exceedingly monotonous and it seemed that much of the motivation must lie simply in money or in the security, independence, or whatever it might be, that money could supply.

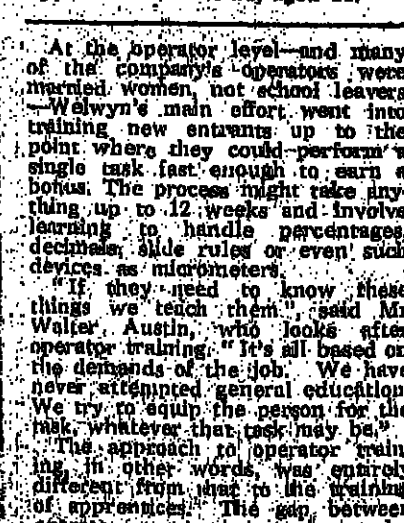
"I'm not for it and I'm not against it. Actually, I just don't like work. But I left school when I was 16 and went on the dole. That was absolutely terrible, sitting around all day. This is better than that. I could be working for more money on a labouring job, but now I'll always have a trade to fall back on, won't I?"

Apprentice technician, aged 18.

At the operator level—and many of the company's operators were married women, not school leavers—Welwyn's main effort went into training new entrants up to the point where they could perform a single task fast enough to earn a bonus. The process might take anything up to 12 weeks and involve learning to handle percentages, decipher slide rules or even such devices as microcomputers.

"If they spend to know these things we teach them," said Walter Austin, who looks after operator training. "It's all based on the demands of the job. We have never attempted general education. We try to get the person to the task, whatever that task may be."

The approach to operator training, in other words, was entirely different from that to the training of apprentices. The gap between operator and apprentice also appeared to be a very large one.



Learning how to use a microcomputer

## YMCA to move into training

by Mark Jackson

The Young Men's Christian Association is to run a £1m scheme for young jobless in the Youth Opportunity programme. It is believed to be the biggest and most comprehensive integrated scheme yet conceived in the north-east of England.

The scheme will provide youngsters in Manchester with a 12-month course of education, counselling and a variety of work experience.

Youngsters who need guidance, counselling, and guidance have poor homes and/or family education but are not eligible for a subnormal will be eligible. It will be recruited by the service, who will cooperate in guidance throughout.

After a fortnight's induction they will spend two to five months in community service and eight months in different kinds of work experience. Education will be provided in the clubs and centres by specially qualified staff.

Besides basic skills, personal awareness, politics, finance, and legal rights, politics and will be covered.

Sports at the YMCA are a central part of the programme, and the participants will be encouraged to take part in any sport they like. They will also be offered two weeks at a YMCA centre in the Lake District, where they may join in mountain climbing, walking, canoeing, and other sports.

"The Government has agreed to this year, but we are still waiting for the summer term leave. We must wait until September to start the programme. Careers employment officers are given discretion to use the funds for the full-time education and would otherwise remain unemployed."

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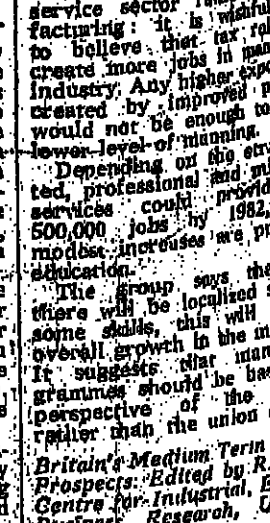
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Learning how to use a microcomputer

Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Batley. . . Forty years ago J. B. Priestley cobbled the Yorkshire names together into "Cleckley-lyke" and peopled its two smoky valleys of blackened stone mills and chapels with God-fearing conservative characters who unfailingly returned a Labour MP.

Now the paradox is reappearing. Batley, which led the country a few years ago in back-to-back houses, today has more Labour councillors than the other parties put together, has just announced it will not be submitting any plans for going comprehensive and expects to see the Education Secretary in court whenever she is ready. Its grammar school is going independent this year.

The paradox is more apparent than real. Batley in longer speaks for itself. Since 1974 it has been part of Kirklees, another cobbled lot of nearly 100 towns, county boroughs and urban districts round Huddersfield. But the significant fact is that Kirklees has been Tory-controlled since last year. It looks incongruous that Kirklees Tories have chosen to defy the law to go comprehensive on such working-class territory as Heckmondwike, Liversedge and Batley. The explanation is simple: it is the only enclave in the kingdom they inherited last year which is not already reorganized. Two dozen comprehensives and three sixth-form colleges now operate within five miles of Huddersfield. Cleckley-lyke's six secondary schools are still unrepentantly grammar or secondary modern.

Since January, 1977, when the first request arrived from Whitehall for plans for ending selection to be submitted, Mrs Williams has been shuffling backwards to avoid a confrontation. Three times she has extended the original deadline of July last year. Then on July 20 this year she made an order under section 99 of the 1944 Act that the authority was failing to carry out its duties. Even then she said that they can use the schools as it until October 1 to comply with the 1976 Act that all secondary schools should go comprehensive.

At a meeting last week the councillors decided they would not be responding. The particular problem of the area and the wishes of the parents made the Education Secretary's request unresponsible. Mrs Williams' director, reported: "Counsel says that Section 76 (of the 1944 Act, laying down the general principle that pupils should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents) has not been before the courts for consideration. The particular context which now pertains to Kirklees." The point is clearly lying at Mrs Williams' feet. It only to leave the can- didate that all, summer term leave, must wait until September to start the programme. Careers employment officers are given discretion to use the funds for the full-time education and would otherwise remain unemployed."

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"All they are doing is playing for time in the hope that there will be a general election and the Tories will win. They know then they won't have to submit any scheme."

This belief accords with one widely held among Labour supporters that word has gone out from Conservative Central Office to the half-dozen or so rebel authorities. "Hold on, help is coming". Certainly Mr Norman St John-Stevens, Shadow Education Secretary, has already declared that repealing the 1976 Act will be one of the first moves of a Tory government.

Mrs Sheldon's convictions are shared by a former president of Kirklees NUT and deputy head of a comprehensive in neighbouring Dewsbury, Mr Jack Thomas. He held a Labour seat on the old Batley council for 16 years but reorganization meant he became a Kirklees employee and thus disqualified from serving on the council.

Representatives from the National Union of Teachers and the Department of Education and Science are more sceptical. They feel that L.A.s. spending varies widely on such programmes and they resent the money provided for improvements does not necessarily get spent in the way it is intended.

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Check-up ordered on cash for disadvantaged

Local authorities have surrendered work of their cherished independent and agreed to monitor spending on educational disadvantage. Mrs Shirley Williams, the Education Secretary, will be carried out the amount to see whether councils have kept the money they should have spent. Under this year's rate support grant settlement they were given a 10 per cent increase in the amount to be spent on disadvantaged children. The money will be monitored by the Education Secretary.

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He is particularly embittered that with Batley boys' grammar school having chosen to go independent the council is now proposing to buy places there to ensure grammar school education for those who merit it.

"They plan to pay for about 60 pupils this autumn. Altogether the council has allocated £80,000 to the school for next year. Really, Batley grammar school is only viable with ratepayers' and taxpayers' money."

The indifference of Kirklees to presenting any statistical evidence of what parents do not want contrasts with the London borough of Kingston where a pressure group has collected impressive figures showing what parents do want. They want the borough to go comprehensive and quickly, claims PACE—the Parents' Action Committee for Education.

The council is committed to selection—but not until 1982. PACE circulated a questionnaire among parents of pupils at 13 schools in north Kingston, got a one in three reply which showed 79 per cent of primary school parents wanted reorganization before a pressure group had collected impressive figures showing what parents do want. They want the borough to go comprehensive and quickly, claims PACE—the Parents' Action Committee for Education.

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among the list of groups—the DES, teachers' organizations, and government—those who consult with parents are not listed.

PACE is seeking a meeting with Miss Margaret Jackson, junior education minister and Mr Norman St John-Stevens. After all, they say, there is a Conservative commitment to parental choice in education. Meanwhile Kingston stands on the words of its education committee chairman, Mrs Angela Rumbold: "We spent the time up to September, 1982, to make absolutely certain that we have the best system. It would be irresponsible to bring in quickly a new system of education."

If the approach of Kingston to going comprehensive appears ludicrously that of another London borough, Redbridge, is condemned by its critics as "criminally dawdling."

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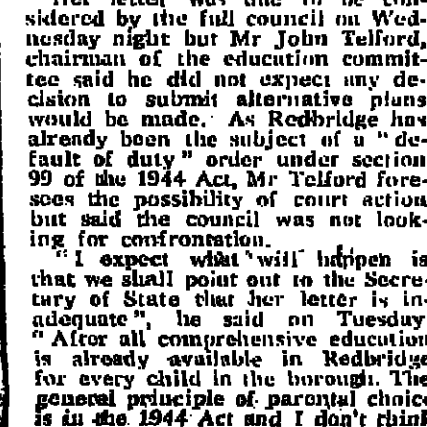
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## Judgment near in intelligence test row

Hearings by an industrial tribunal into the summary dismissal of an educational psychologist for allegedly failing to show he had carried out intelligence tests were concluded last week. They began in mid-March, and the tribunal, at Reading, Berkshire, has reserved its decision after 13 full days of hearings.

Mr I. Corina, an educational psychologist employed by Berkshire County Council, is claiming unfair dismissal by Mr John Hornsby, the county's retiring Director of Education, for gross misconduct. Mr Corina, who was dismissed on June 3, 1977, told the tribunal he was sacked without notice, without prior suspension, without reference to his employing committee, and without an appeal while still an employee.

He had received no official written or oral warnings about his conduct and the dismissal, unprecedented in local government service, breached his conditions of service. Moreover, Mr Corina said he had been dismissed in the middle of a previous industrial tribunal to which he had applied to obtain his additional particulars of employment under the Contracts of Employment Act.

Mr Maurice Corina, who represented his brother during the hearings, said he treated tests with admirable caution and looked at the total problem before him. His principal educational psychologist, Mr David Brownhill, had a conviction about tests which his brother did not share with such enthusiasm.

Mr Eldred Tubuchnik, counsel for Berkshire, said there was an overwhelming mountain of evidence of failures to use tests properly and comply with manuals of instruction. Judgements of intellectual ability had been made on the basis of incomplete test forms. Notes and scores on scraps of paper did not support test results, or they appeared incomplete.

The keeping of proper professional records and forms was important for children who might follow. Concluding the hearings, the tribunal chairman, Captain F. H. Thomas, said a decision would be reserved and given in writing. In the interim, he asked that both sides should agree details Mr Corina's appeal should be held in order to assist the tribunal in the event of compensation being awarded.

## Ban on Asian eye make-up

Eye make-up worn by Asian children is to be banned. Britain's new safety code announced last week. The black make-up known as Surma and traditionally worn by Asians contains potentially dangerous lead sulphide.

It is harmless on the skin but if children wearing it rub their eyes and then suck their fingers, they could contract lead poisoning. The make-up will be placed on a list of substances banned in cosmetics. The new law is expected to come into operation within a few weeks.

## Birthrate rises

Births in the six months to June were nearly 2 per cent up on the first half of last year, according to Government figures. 6,698 more children were registered.

## Women in engineering

Five women students have been awarded scholarships of £225 a year to study in subjects which have historically been heavily male dominated—physics, electronics, engineering and maths. These Caroline Hester Memorial Trust Scholarships are administered by the Electrical Association for Women.

## Race board to probe Brent complaint

An inquiry has been ordered into the Community Relations Council of the London borough of Brent. The Commission for Racial Equality decided on the investigation after a formal complaint from the council's education officer, Mrs Monique Lax, who has given up her job following a series of clashes with the council's executive.

Mrs Lax, who is black and was formerly a school inspector in Kenya, had held her job on a probationary basis since she took it in June 1977. Three months ago the race commission asked Brent to confirm her appointment, but it did not, trying instead to hold its

own inquiry which was boycotted by the commission and the council's principal community relations officer, Mr Philip Sealy.

Mrs Lax later complained that the West Indian-dominated council executive was making it impossible for her effectively to carry out her duties; by among other things ordering her not to follow Mr Sealy's instructions.

Clashes have occurred at a number of meetings of the education advisory group. Some executive members have objected to volunteer teachers from Brent schools recruited by Mrs Lax to run a Saturday school for disadvantaged

children. They also wanted to override her selection of children for the school, which included a number of badly deprived white children who she said needed help as much as any of the black ones.

Mrs Lax left the council on Friday to marry a community relations officer in Bristol. She has resigned by agreement with the commission, who are paying her three months' pay in lieu of notice.

A CRE spokesman said this week that her complaint was only one issue which had made an inquiry necessary. "There have been problems for several years, and the executive itself asked our predeces-

sors, the community relations mission to run one."

This will be the second inquiry to be run into the affairs of the CRE took over. It is now running a report into the running of community relations council in London borough of Newham.

The Brent inquiry will begin August 23. It will be led by Bob Goodman, a lecturer in social work at Buckingham College, and Gwen Rickus, a member of the race commission.

Mark



Playful preview: children due to start at St Stephen's Primary School, Shepherd's Bush, get a chance to visit their new school and meet some of the staff. The scheme is one of 14 Headstart schemes being run during the summer holidays by the Inner London Education Authority to help children starting at primary and secondary schools to get to know their new surroundings.

## Tories block Derbyshire move to open files to parents

A move to persuade Derbyshire Education Committee to allow parents to see confidential records kept on school children has been defeated.

It was introduced by Mr Bob Walker, a Labour member employed by Nottinghamshire County Council as youth and community officer, who said records should be seen by the people most concerned—parents.

Society was going through a period of change in which the proliferation of secret filing systems and the disclosure of confidential information to people who had no right to it was giving rise to public anxiety, he said.

This tendency needs to be reversed and we are today in a position to do something about it, he said. "I am not a parent, but I am a citizen and I am entitled to know what is going on in this country."

The chairman of the education committee, Mrs Anneke Noyce, denied that record cards were being kept on children. She said that the records were not available to the public, police, social service departments,

or even to colleges of further education and universities.

These records are used only in the school which the child attends. Information is compiled by teachers communicating with other teachers, who are also subject to the same discipline under which the records are compiled, and a high standard of professional accuracy is observed.

The motion was lost, with the Conservative majority winning on a 10-8 vote. Mr Walker said he would appeal against it, except for one member, Labour member voted for it with one against and one abstention.

Mr Phyllis Bellchambers, the Conservative teacher who resigned in 1976 to protest at the alleged keeping of secret dossiers on pupils and teachers in her school, was last week refused leave to take her case to the Court of Appeal.

She is contesting a decision by the Education Appeal Tribunal in 1976 to strip her of her right to teach in the county, on the grounds that she was a danger to the school.

Mrs Bellchambers' appeal is being heard by the Court of Appeal in London on June 21.

## Sex bias lives on in maths and science courses

Sex discrimination will only disappear from schools if teachers want it to, according to a review of the workings of the Sex Discrimination Act in Educational Research. Coeducational secondary schools are among the worst culprits when it comes to discriminating girls from science and maths.

"Different treatment of boys and girls," says Ms Gaby Weiner, an assistant research officer at the National Foundation for Educational Research, "is often on the grounds that they are biologically, intellectually, or emotionally different."

But "if girls do tend to lack spatial or mathematical concepts, whether because of home or school environment or innate qualities, it is up to the school to make up for these deficiencies rather than reinforce them."

Early restrictions of girls in mechanical and spatial experiences may be the cause of later rejection of scientific subjects.

Single sex schools seem better at overcoming any such deficiencies. A proportion of girls taking science and maths is 25 per cent. Even mixed schools, however, are not doing well. The success of the Sex Discrimination Act in schools depends upon teachers working in the spirit as much as within the letter of the law.

Option systems often reinforce traditional sex roles without unlawful under the Act because of advice on careers and choice of subject schools could secure more male preceptors.

"Many of the strongest schools to society's sex role of gender leavers have a time of gender certainty, and security in their own minds."

Early restrictions of girls in mechanical and spatial experiences may be the cause of later rejection of scientific subjects.

United States

## Doctor launches scheme to beat heart disease

from Charlotte Byers

Each year almost a million Americans have heart attacks. Of those more than 650,000 die. Doctors know that many of the causes of heart disease such as smoking, overweight, lack of exercise and poor diet, can be reversed.

One way to educate the public is to teach children how to lead healthier lives. Dr Charles Kuntzleman, a national consultant for the Young Men's Christian Association, has devised a programme, 'Feelin' Good', to teach children about their heart and how to care for it.

'Feelin' Good' has been introduced in 70 schools and 60 YMCA's around the country. The programme involves between 6,000 and 7,000 children from kindergarten up to the high grade—ages 4 to 14.

At the Palo Alto, California, YMCA, 17 youngsters aged from 10 to 14 are enrolled in the course. They participate in 10 sessions of 45 minutes each.

Today the children are learning about why cigarette smoking is bad for their heart. Four teachers at the children on the floor. Paul Kuntzleman, who is majoring in human biology at Stanford University, says: "Smoking affects your nervous system. It makes your heart rate and blood pressure increase. Your fingertips get cold and each puff constricts the small vessels in your arms and legs."

"What else does smoking do?" she asks. Paul Ting, a ten-year-old Chinese boy, replies: "Smoking is bad for your circulation." Another child says: "It makes your heart rate increase 20 beats a minute."

Dotty Cowell, a mother who is also a teacher, takes out a cigarette. She shows the children how nicotine affects their lungs by allowing the youngsters to examine a paper napkin on which she has blown smoke, leaving yellow patches. The experiment does not deter an eight-year-old from asking if he may have a puff.

Other classes deal with the management of stress. "What do you do when you are angry?" a teacher asks. "I take it out on my younger brother," a child replies. The teachers urge the children to take walks or jog when they are angry.

"Get it out of your system. Don't bottle it up," they tell the children. Each session is an hour of health tips in class and an hour in the gym. The children run back and forth, do gymnastics and exercises that stimulate their hearts. At least two or

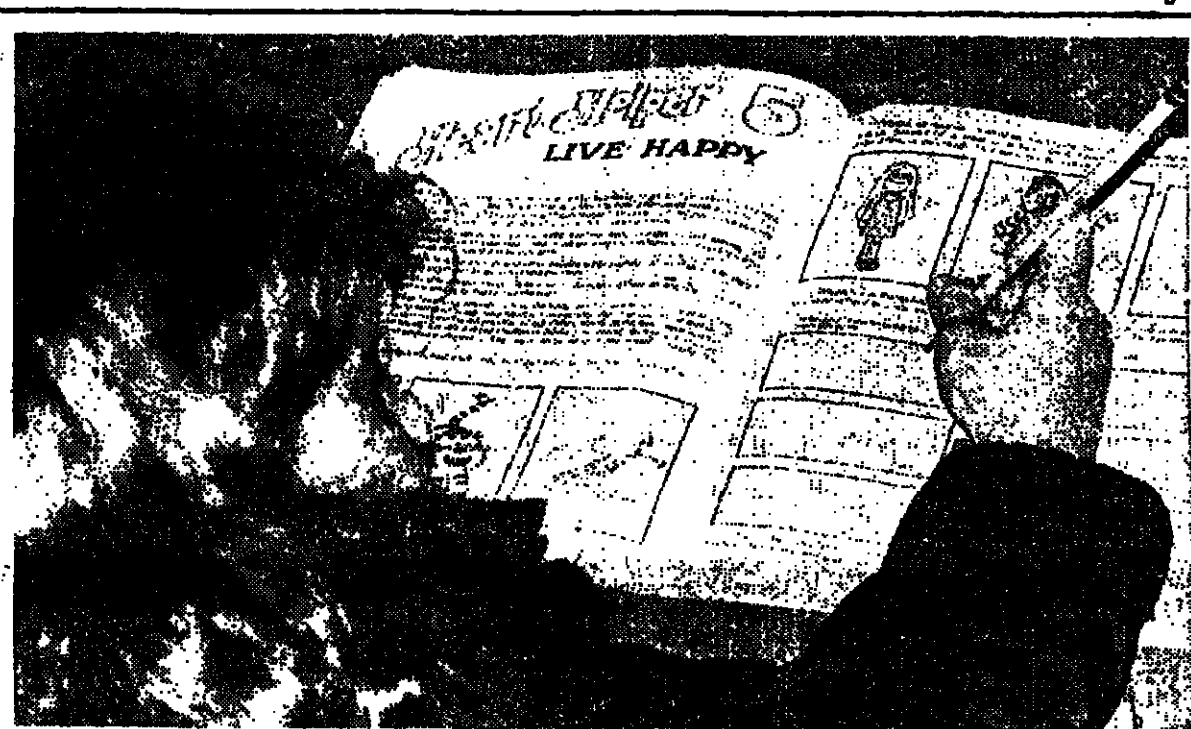
three times during this hour, they are asked to stop and take their pulses. Kuntzleman thinks the programme is important because in the United States almost half of all 12-year-olds have tried smoking. Ten to 20 per cent of the youngsters have elevated fats in their blood and 4 per cent already have high blood pressure.

Dr Richard Greene, a Palo Alto paediatrician, says he thinks 'Feelin' Good' will help children form useful habits patterns that will help them maintain cardio-vascular fitness throughout their lives.

"Children tell their parents not to smoke. They also moult more carefully the food their parents buy at the store. They have learned how

to read labels and know the meaning of words such as polyunsaturated and cholesterol."

Greene adds that in the patients he sees obesity is frequently a problem. "If one parent is fat, then 40 per cent of their offspring will be obese. If both parents are fat, then 80 per cent of their children will be fat, too."



A child enjoying one of Dr Kuntzleman's books.

Australia

## Sternest opponent facing the left

from John Kirkaldy

Professor Leonie Kramer has in recent years become one of the most controversial figures in Australian education. As president since 1973 of the Australian Council for Educational Standards (ACES), she has been a strong critic of "progressive" trends in schools and universities.

For many on the left and in teachers' organisations she has become, as a consequence, the champion of reaction and conservatism, while for many others she has emerged as the spokesman for commonsense in an increasingly acrimonious debate.

ACES is Australia's leading educational pressure group in education. Professor Kramer describes herself as a "real conservative", emphasising that she does not want a complete return to yesterday's methods and ideals.

It was founded five years ago in Melbourne by a group of educationists and parents who were concerned by what they saw as a general fall in standards. The group's aim was to promote a return to basic English and mathematical skills and a movement away from assessment.

ACES is clearly influenced by similar groups in other western countries, particularly Britain, but its prime concern is to stop what it sees as the erosion of standards.

Its monthly magazine, ACES Review, asks the kind of issues commonly found in British black papers—illiteracy rates, the quality of homework and what one correspondent recently called "mish-mash courses and ersatz learning". The opposi-



Professor Leonie Kramer

tion is often seen as "progressives" or "trendies" or "misguided liberals". Professor Kramer is a formidable opponent and one who has expertly handled frequent media exposure. (She has become something of a double act, recently opposing Mr Van Veen, president of the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF).)

For the last 10 years she has been Professor of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney and is the author of several books in her field. She is also a member of the Secondary Schools Board and the Universities Council.

Professor Kramer is critical, for example, of the New South Wales

state government's decision to drop the school certificate examination in favour of internal assessment in all subjects except English and mathematics.

Failure in an exam is constructive, she argues, because it "shows you what you can't do". She has no objection to a system of grading which combines exams and continuous assessment.

Professor Kramer attacks the progressives in Australian education for having a philosophy that believes extra funding is essential for improvement in schools. "Money does not solve these problems on its own," she states.

She concedes that there is no objective method of comparing standards between today and yesterday. Yet she is concerned at the inability of many of her own students (even some of the most intelligent) to use basic English techniques.

There is much within Australian education which adds momentum to the ACES's cause (current membership is about 1,800). Australia is a fundamentally conservative country: since 1949 the Labour Party has only been in power for three years at a federal level, though there are at the moment labour state governments in NSW, South Australia and Tasmania.

The ruling Liberal-National Country Party coalition government of Malcolm Fraser is determined to reduce federal expenditure and its budget guidelines for 1979 see only a 1 per cent increase in spending on education (TES, June 23, 1978).

Whatever their views of her opinions, Australian educationists are coming to realize that much of Professor Kramer's philosophy is beginning to dominate government policy in Australia.

Sri Lanka

## Courses should be run locally, says report

from D. G. Udalgama

Some course guides for Sri Lanka visualise all children of a particular grade doing the same topic on the same day in all the schools on the island. This is one of the findings of the Educational Reform Committee appointed by the Education Minister, Mr Nissanka Wijeyeratne.

The committee recommends the setting up of some kind of "peripheral authority with people's participation". It observes that the present central administrative machinery in effect operates directly under the Minister of Education although he is also preoccupied with policy formulation exercises.

"There are about 2.5 million students, 120,000 teachers and over 25,000 employer employees almost totally under the control of the Ministry of Education."

"For a country of 13.7 million inhabitants, this means that nearly one quarter of the population is controlled by a huge, heavy, single organisational body. This is clearly too heavy an administrative burden."

The committee thinks the situation could be vastly improved if national policy were administered through district educational development boards.

The local authority and the proposed district ministry would participate through financial commitment as well as representation on the board. A senior director of education would be the chairman of the board as well as chief executive and state services such as health and social services and religious denominations would be represented.

The committee considers urgent a supply of appropriately qualified principals and teachers. It has found evidence of waste of human resources in this area and calls for community support of a campaign for the redistribution of available teachers.

In order to eliminate the "uneconomic" running of schools or duplication of services, employment of staff for reasons other than the specific needs of a teaching programme, or allocating buildings to schools without pupils, the most effective measure would be to gear each school unit to an annual programme budget, says the committee.

Recommendations early steps to "household the pledge of helping children of the underprivileged in rural, remote, slum and plantation areas."

China

## Youth skill shows in maths test

by John Gardner

More than 200,000 middle school students took part in a national mathematics contest in China, the first of its kind in the People's Republic.

This was in marked contrast to the mood of the Cultural Revolution, a time when any attempt to display or reward academic prowess was frowned upon. "Seeking personal fame and fortune" and "putting intellectual education in the first place" were considered bourgeois.

Now, under the benevolent eye of Teng Hsiao-ping, who is mending the drive to raise standards, the contest is being held, before the

intellectually distinguished is all the rage and academic virtue need no longer be its own reward.

The winner of the competition was Yon Yung, a 15-year-old from Peking. Together with 56 other successful competitors he attended a prize-giving ceremony at which many leading members of China's educational elite were present.

Fang Yi, the Politburo member directly responsible for science policy, presented the awards, and the names of the winners were published in the newspapers with the usual caution that only two of them were from "bourgeois families."



## One-choice preschool

It seems extraordinary that Preschool Playgroups Association should oppose any expansion of nursery education in districts where it might compete with private groups. If each area provided very classes and nursery schools (many of them offering more than one place than at present), the nurseries and playgroups, parents would have a real choice at last.

MARGARET GODFREY,  
KATHLEEN ROWE,  
14 St James's Drive,  
London SW17.

I was surprised to read the statements which my article, "Intellectual Suicide" (July 14) aroused in Mr. Rassey ("College life of student critics", July 28). Mr. Rassey claims that in "intellectual rigor" there is nothing new, and that it is the duty of all college in order to condone the fallacious undisciplined attitudes. In my article I referred to the places to which the more leveled colleges in particular colleges a student in general Mr. Rassey would be well advised to apply. Of his "intellectual discipline" making means a mere exhumation of that which he intends to criticize. FORMER STUDENT.  
(Name and address supplied.)

# Community

[illegible]

I hope that he will continue his second conference and community work with teachers and professional people in education, that they may do in the "different manner" the "different manner" he supposes. Their approaches may be different, but none the less they are different.

The number of us in contact with colleges are looking hard at the nature of institutions, their plans, structures, and service, especially at the type of curriculum. I trust that it is not too arrogant as to believe that it is the only road to humanity and that I hope to have a client, self-consciousness, well as a worth travelling.

It is a pleasure to have  
CARL FOSTER,  
Community College  
Leicester, Leicestershire.

I would suggest that the current state of knowledge and experience

Sir, I would like to comment on the recent article on computers by Mr G. Bails. The National Computer Council have an enhanced version of their SPL programme which enables the timetabler to keep a constant check on the split site situation. While no complete solution to the split site problem has been produced, the SPL timetabler does enable us to construct our timetable for a school of 2,100 pupils and 140 staff housed in four separate buildings dispersed over a distance of about 11 miles.

I would like to emphasize that the computer is not the panacea of timetable manufacture, it is merely a tool. The timetabler and his team must be prepared to think, plan, think, plan and think again just as for a manually produced solution; nevertheless the computer gives a certainty to the checking process that is unbeatable. The use of the computer as a planning tool has hardly been touched.

C. R. THACKERY,  
Principal,  
North Leamington School,  
Leamington Spa.

# 100 Important

Dr. McAnispe's comments say about teachers with particular difficulties, cause me some concern.

In talking about incompetent young teachers, he suggests that they are perceptive teachers. The reasons given are that such youngsters may be less afraid of involvement with pupils and do not know just what type of perceptive teacher is envisaged, and in my experience most perceptive teachers concentrate on the children's special educational needs.

Dr. McAnispe's perceptive teacher is a very demanding job, involving intense involvement with small proportion of children.

Dr. McAnispe's idea makes me think of my greatest fear re-

schools do. Is there not just possibility that these teachers know something about the children they teach daily that aides the

## Lost, the beauty

Sir,—Mr Geoffrey Potter pays a flitting tribute ("when they were good", July 28) to the old secondary modern schools. May another school offer a further comment?

The point which needs more emphasis is size of school. One of the best schools I ever taught in was a secondary modern school in Outer London—Surrey in the 1950s. With fewer than 200 boys according to records were not set high but the standards that were set were exacted by a staff kept stat-

Slr.—I wonder if it ever occurs to Fred Jarvis that the much-nuanced "professionalism" of the teachers could leave them in rather unhelpful positions?

Evidence is mounting that the entire educational bandwagon of the past 20 years has been a total disaster.

The public might start to look

Second, the software available for minis is better and more extensive than that available for micro computers. For some minis there is a full range of software including assemblers, BASIC interpreters, editors, simple operating systems and several compilers are being developed. The software is simple

Sir,—With reference to your very provocative article ("Teachers are for battle with careers officers and in-service training", July 14) allow me to express the feelings of many careers officers, working in what can quite adequately be described as a harmonious relationship with careers teachers.

It is a pity that some teachers should oscillate the few difficulties in the training situation into "who does what" dispute. If the criticism which emerged from the great debate is anything near an effective assessment of teachers, those who suggest that careers officers should remain "outside the school altogether", might do well to concentrate on basic maths, and English; and more to the point, effectively pass on this knowledge to the unfortunate pupils who are failing simple selection tests frequently.

With regards to training, educationists should really "grow up" and not hang on to the erroneous attitude that the "teachers of the teachers" are necessarily "experts" in the role of training officials vis-à-vis vocational guidance.

Many careers teachers and careers officers (not to detail other professionally interested persons) have gained enormously from the short courses organized under the auspices of the Institute of Careers Officers. In their short history of 10 years the National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers has been represented unfortunately by a group of ambitious teachers who would postulate the theory that no teachers can train or that a teaching certificate is the panacea of all qualifications.

In his preface to *A Practical Handbook of Careers Education and Guidance* (1972) Roy Hoppel, then their secretary of NACCT, said, "At the outset I should make it quite clear that as I am neither an expert in vocational guidance nor an expert in the fields of psychology or sociology"—and quote "I view the whole subject through the eyes of an untrained but experienced careers teacher."

**D. BURNS,**  
55-Clontworth House,  
Netherfield,  
Middlebrough.

# Impossible dream      Morons v. brains

Had the report not been produced the ultimate absurdity of mixed ability is demonstrable by a simple thought experiment. Consider a fifth form mathematics class of 28 pupils representative of the full range of ability. If the class were divided into two groups of 14, the top two should have taken, and passed, O level at the end of the fourth year and would be working for additional mathematics. Another five would be studying for O level. Then there should be about 10 taking CSE. Among these some would be doing the examination and the best two of these might be taking extra papers for A level mathematics. The weaker CSE entrants might be doing a Mode 2 examination, requiring much course work. There then remain 11 pupils requiring various degrees of remedial teaching, or a level 1 or 2 course, or a course for the inference of basic calculations.

No one teacher could possibly deal with the diverse needs of such a mixed group. Teaching to the middle of the class would necessarily be to the detriment of the best and the weakest in the class. Those who would suffer most would be the potential A level students.

Before anyone suggests that this is an argument for a unified examination at 16 may I say that it is nothing of the sort. Mathematics is perhaps an extreme example but much the same is true of other "technical" subjects such as modern languages and the sciences. If there is to be a new examination system it must take into account the very wide differences of ability that do exist.

To return to the point about mixed-ability teaching, some smaller comprehensive schools may find themselves forced into a degree of mixed-ability work simply because of class sizes. If we may agree that any good school will try to teach each child according to his or her own needs and abilities, and thus the individual tuition that this seems to imply is not a practical possibility, I see an alternative in children of different ages but similar abilities could be taught together.

I would be interested to know of any school where this has been done. As for larger schools, there is little doubt that sensible cottaging produces the greatest benefit for the greatest number.

B. C. HELLYER,  
8 Shuttle Close,  
Sidcup,  
Kent.

Sh.—The front page headlines of the TES (July 28) present something of a paradox. We read that the DES are to urge schools to "get round the table with industry", and of "Mixed ability misses". The first implies the obvious, that secondary education must be concerned with educating young people for life after school, and the second report indicates that mixed ability teaching should go on but if in doubt, don't.

There is little reference to why young people are taught what they are taught. Qualifications such as O and A levels in maths, physics, biology and metalwork are necessary for future employment. Therefore it makes sense if all those of a particular level in a particular discipline are taught as a group. It is not the structure that should worry us but the attitude of those who teach. If they leave a trail of young people full of pride because they are in the A group then the

It is dangerous to change the structure which appears to have happened in 12 per cent of comprehensive schools. By clanging or organizing teaching into mixed-ability groups they will change the philosophy. The aims are in danger of not being realized.

Creating comprehensive schools was a big enough, and necessary step to overcome the distasteful attitude of "morons v brains". Yes, they all now go to the same school. Surely it is not too difficult to explain to young people that they are in particular trouble because they may wish to follow a particular training for what essential employment when leaving school. Mrs Williams obviously appreciates this in her urge for schools to have a close contact with industry.

One feels that the muddled and woolly practice that is going on in the state educational system is due to a confusion over the philosophy of education at the different levels. Mixed-ability teaching may be all right at first-school level and to some extent in the early years of middle school, where personalities and characters are still being formed, but whether we like it or not, the secondary level is particularly close to the day they leave school and are of age to qualify for employment.

ALMA TONGUE,  
22 Milvil Road,  
Lee-on-Solent,  
Hampshire.

Sir,—Peter Newell's recent remarks on corporal punishment seemed innocent enough of the "hysteria" deprecated by Fred Jarvis (letters, July 28), but Mr Jarvis's tendentious defence of his union's attitude should certainly not pass without comment.

First, while the NUT may not actually have any policy on corporal punishment, its approval of the

Discipline in Schools urges that parents be required to sign a form agreeing to their children being beaten by teachers.

Second, the document's bland assertion that "corporal punishment in schools continues to diminish" (46/18), is totally unfounded. No teacher has collected the statistics which exist separately in the punishment books all maintained schools are required to keep under Administrative Memorandum No. 313. The power to do so has always existed under Section 92 of the Education

Neither the NUT nor anyone else can, therefore, have the slightest idea whether the evidence of beating is increasing or decreasing. It is interesting, however, to compare the wave of mass beatings last March (of score, upon score of school pupils protesting about the unions' found unnecessary, and does fact exist, in any country i dential Europe. In some, i this reaction on disappeared survey more ago.

**EDWARD BAKER,**  
The Portia Trust,  
47A HINFIELD Road,  
West Hampstead, London.

Sir.—The article by Alan Twelvetrees ("School as straitjacket," 21st edition) contains many truths about school-based education, but is marred by its largely negative approach saddens me. I too attended the community school conference at Sentorobury Campus. So did 250 others, by no means all of them teachers, as Alan Twelvetrees's presence testifies; and nearly twice that number were turned away from a conference which had been given little public advertise-

The most pertinent impressions of the conference are these. First, school-based community education is growing explosively, for a variety of reasons, some ideological and some expedient. Secondly, this rapid rate of change is leading to much bewilderment by definition dynamic. The change may come from the educator and the community worker is much less likely. I am—or it may come from the community. The task of the community worker and community teacher is identical: to offer tutories, to identify needs,

There is one major difference. The community teacher would be based in the neighborhood, not in a "learning school." He will not be a teacher, but he will experience all the tensions and role conflicts of a teacher. Twelvetrees indicates. Yes, the community teacher will be selected by the community. The leadership of the school, of which I am proud, guards itself as an enclave environment. A place desecrated by the duality of social and cultural values. As Twelvetrees wrote over 50 years ago, I hope it provides materials for the community to learn from. Unimportant. It is not a learning situation; you must learn on your own. You may see it as a haven, a place to reach some other child; but you know that it is not. It is only very occasionally a workshop, a learning workshop. Ask me.

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ous.

The present, most intense awareness of the nature of the primary school as a whole and its effect of the interpenetration of the techniques and relationships at all levels, understood by community workers, and I readily admit we have much to learn from "extensive literature on social development," I am afraid. Twelvethree refers, I am afraid, he will accept my conviction there are grave dangers in the critical application of social theory, particularly from community studies (generic community work) to another (community nursing).

I hope that he will understand my second contention that teachers work as professionals, not as common school teachers. I am sure that if we do a common thing, we are doing it "the different way." The difference is in our purposes. Their approach is different, but none the less elementary.

A number of us in conference and colleges are looking hard at the nature of institutions, their many structures and styles and crucially, their service to society. I trust that you are all so arrogant as to believe that it is the only road to community but I hope you have a client self-conscience which is a worth travelling.

CAROL POSTER,  
Globy Community College  
Leicester, Mass.



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## Sport



Schoolgirl swimmer Sharron Davies, formerly of Plymouth School, Plymouth, and now at Kelly College, Tavistock, achieved two striking distinctions at the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Alberta—she won the gold medal in the 200 metres individual medley and swam the fastest 100 metres (59.96 sec) by a British woman in the history of the sport.

## Schoolboy sailors impress experts

by Stanley Levenson

Schoolboys Stuart Rix and David Ling are two young men who could follow in the gold Olympic yachting wake of Sidney Pattison, John Macdonald-Smith, Chris Davies, Reg White and John Osborn.

Rix and Ling, representing the Norfolk Schools Sailing Association, won the Fast Handicap class of the national schools regatta at Lake Bassenthwaite, Cumbria, in their 420, shortly after their victory in the national youth trials in London.

But it was the manner of their success which provoked expert enthusiasm and talk of yachting deities in the 1984 Olympic Games. One enthusiast described their seamanship as "perfect".

Rix and Ling had a clear win at Lake Bassenthwaite from Martin Gee of Haversham, Cumbria, in a single-handed OK, and Gary Darch and Peter Hubbersty (Cheshire) in another 420.

This championship, like the others at the regatta, was based on a series of races, but the main event, for the Mount Haes Trophy, was a one-off affair restricted to Mirror class dinghies.

The winners were Mark and Paul Stubbs (Cheshire), who had come equal second in the Mirror series to Philip Sowden and Richard Clark of Slough Grammar School, Warwickshire's Debbie Castle, who had paired up with Carl Bales for the other joint second place, had her brother Graham as crew on the Mount Haes event, and again came second, Scottish siblings Ali-

air and Rhona McIntyre, from the Grampians, were third. Other results: Slow Handicap: 1, Michael Yzatt and Tim Ruhl (Essex), Flying Junior; 2, Anthony Davies (Whitby), Topper; 3, Nigel Price and Tim Rix (Slough Grammar School), Mirale. Enterprise: 1, Stephen Grant and David Garfield (Northumberland); 2, Andrew McWhirter and Michael Chuter (N. Yorkshires); 3, Mark Baker and Susan Cassidy (Kent). Laser: 1, Tim Taviner (Oxford); 2, John Sadler (Warwickshire); 3, Ben Tucker (Derby).

As some 200 boats were racing for these schools titles, two other schoolboys were travelling further afield—in the Tall Ships' race. They battled their boris through the English Channel, the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the Atlantic, to the end of the Tall Ships' race next weekend.

Simon Harris, of Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge, North Wales, is now aboard the Sea Training Association's schooner, Sir Winston Churchill, and Nicholas Lloyd, of Kingsway Comprehensive School, Chester, is aboard another Association vessel, Malcolm Miller. They expect to meet in Oslo at the end of the Tall Ships' race next weekend.

## Walton's tennis double

A. Walton, of Koble Preparatory School, London, won both titles in the twenty-ninth tennis championships of the International Association of Preparatory Schools, the first of which were played at Wimbledon.

He beat A. Page (Windsorham House, Washington, Sussex) in the singles and, with schoolmate S. Garwood, beat J. Vaughan and G. Woodward of Edgeway Hall, Millfields Junior School, in the doubles.

All matches throughout the tournament were in one set; 240 boys took part in the preliminary and final rounds at Dulwich College, Herrow School, St Paul's School and the Rushmore and Harrow Clubs.

Fewer, who is now in the Davis Cup squad, Andrew Jarrett, and Robin Drysdale are others of the better known senior ranked players who came through the TAPS ranks.

## Students get scholarships

Student golfer Janet Millville, 20, and judo champion William Jackson, also 20, are the first winners of John Moores Sports Scholarship, which allows talented sportsmen and women to get involved in the sports scholarship business with the backing of the Office of Cleaning Services, Company.

## People

### Schools

Mr T. McSweeney, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Prestwich, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Mr E. J. Lofthouse, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Mr F. Bennett, deputy head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Mr J. A. G. Rowland, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

### Universities

Professor Marcus H. Miller, professor of economics at Manchester University, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Dr David Whitehouse, research engineer and research manager at Rank Taylor Lomas, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Dr Robert Skidelsky, head of the department of history, philosophy and European studies at the London Polytechnic, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Professor John Ferguson, dean of the faculty of arts at the Open University, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Sir Frederick Dainton, chairman of the University Grants Committee, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Dr Donald J. A. Mathew, reader in modern history at Durham University, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Professor Helmut van der Laan, reader in horticulture at the University of Reading, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Professor J. F. Dewey, of the University of New York at Albany, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Professor J. R. Harris, head of the department of economic and social sciences at the University of Birmingham, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Professor P. M. C. James, head of the department of dental surgery at the University of Birmingham, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Dr L. R. C. Hume, head of the department of clinical psychology at the University of Surrey, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

Mr G. Home, deputy managing director of the Royal Bank of Scotland, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, and Mr C. Payne, head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury, is to be head of St. Peter's RC Grammar School, Bury.

# 13

## Take it from there

Peter Chilver pinpoints ways in which teachers can use drama to help children towards a clearer understanding of human behaviour



Peter Chilver (above) and his drama students at Langdon School, Newham.



Photographs by Michael Abraham

and so recognizes the difficulty of changing a story into a play. A story especially for drama, because when you make a play out of a story by someone else, you have to chop and change it.

Opportunities to work in the round, to make sound-tapes, videotapes, photo-plays, films—these are some of the ways in which we can explore the potential of improvisation. We can do this without any of the equipment.

Another difficulty follows from this awareness of the form of presentation, which is that children often have a highly developed sense of an ending. Frequently this gets in the way of their creativity and imagination. This can happen in two slightly different ways. Either they work backwards from the ending, leaving their thinking to the plot, the grand climax of the play, or they are more modest, or more precisely, they are unwilling simply to get on with the improvisation and see what happens.

An important part of the teacher's work is to encourage just such a willingness to take risks, to accept the uncertainty and spontaneity and one way of doing this is literally to say that the ending is unimportant. In a sense, the end is the least important part of the work. The question central to work in improvisation is always: what might happen next? The answer might involve the introduction of new characters, or moving the time backward rather than forward to examine the earlier lives of the characters. Or it might involve a movement sideways in time, using what Alfred Hitchcock very

sply calls the "meanwhile back on the farm" technique.

Equally fruitful is the idea of a press conference, or whatever mode of inquiry may be appropriate, as which the escaped convict, or the king, or Robin Hood, or whoever, is carefully questioned by the rest of the class about his character and actions, and invited to extend his thinking in greater detail or complexity.

Children are often immensely stimulated by the material they are improvising, but limited in the various techniques or conventions which they can bring into play. Thus one group of nine-year-olds introduced their improvisation with the simple announcement:

Scene One: At School.

And later:

Scene Two: At Home  
Other children then started to use the same convention, working out a shaped sequence of scenes, or a sequence of scenes.

Another group suddenly started using the idea of drama with an accompanying commentary or "voice over".

Actor 1 (as narrator) The tide carried them to an uninhabited island, and there they were awakened by the sound of birds.

Actor 2 (yawning) Where shall we sleep tonight then?

Actor 1 (as character) We shall have to make a hut, won't we? What do you say?

he spent out what he was thinking. The conversation fascinated other children, and they started using it too.

A further difficulty has to do, oddly enough, with something usually thought of as non-dramatic—the art of discussion. A good number of children's improvisations collapse and disintegrate in a more or less rough-and-tumble or fight. This may well be because the children literally have no experience of talking their way through situations involving any sort of disagreement or conflict.

This lack of experience is likely to extend not only to the real everyday world, but also to the world of the media. Most children watch a lot of television, and this offers them a great deal of drama and an even greater deal of melodrama.

But it presents them with very few models of people talking out their ideas, or listening to one another, or sharing their views. The teacher has to help them to build such models for themselves, through repeated opportunities to engage in informal discussion across a wide range of topics.

I think that opportunities to talk and discuss are the central part of a drama teacher's work, and it is the lack of such opportunities which most inhibits children's work in improvisation. If we ask children to divide into groups and to start discussing and improvising, we are asking them to do something that is immensely worthwhile, but also very hard. Even the most well disposed of adults find such a task challenging and, sometimes, quite impossible.

Among the various ways in which a teacher can help the class, I would single out two.

The first is to make absolutely clear to the children the various techniques by which you wish them to work: they do not have to worry about how they will end the drama; they can re-start as often as they wish; they can change plans and change roles; they are to have a go without having worked it all out beforehand.

In effect, the teacher makes it clear that the exercise is exploratory, good-natured, co-operative. Our aim is to listen to each other and see what we can do together.

The second is to help children to see that they can participate in a group's improvisation in varied but equally valid ways. They can take an acting part. They can take part in the discussion while taking a very minor role in the drama itself. They may prefer to create the drama rather than to participate in it. In this latter case they come close to the director in the cinema, or the playwright in the theatre.

Some children even act out a role in rehearsals and then hand it over to someone else when it comes to performance—not because they are shy, but because they so enjoy standing back and looking at what they have made. In this short sequence, Karen, aged nine, takes great pleasure in acting out a make-believe domestic drama, and in organizing the rest of her group to assist her:

Karen: We've just moved in. Pretend—Steve started to phone people to come to a party. Karen has started to cook for the party.

Steve: Can I put these in the oven?  
Karen: Oh no, darling, they're cooked already. They'll be overcooked, darling.  
Lisa: Come and help me change the baby's nappy, and do the washing-up later, and now come on, darling, and get the nappy. (Out of character:) Come and be my child.  
Lisa: No. I don't think I'm interested.  
Karen: But I've got no child.  
Lisa: Oh all right, then.

Karen: (Back in character) I'm going to be very busy at home. My husband's doing the shop, and he's getting very tired. He wants a cup of coffee. (Out of character:) Stephen, call me 'cos you want a cup of coffee.  
Steve: What?  
Karen: You say: Can I have a cup of coffee?  
Steve: (In character) Karen! Can I have a cup of coffee then? I'm getting tired out here.

In other sessions it was Lisa who dominated, in others it was Steve. They all found situations which especially absorbed them and in which they became the leaders.

Drama is all about human interaction. It is about what people do to one another and why they do it. Improvised drama involves us in coming together to work out different views of how people behave to one another, different views of their motivations and intentions.

The teacher's role is one of helping children towards an increasingly complex and rich view of human behaviour, not only by examining what we do, but also by using as many as possible of the different techniques and conventions by which the artist dramatizes, and thus to make the skills of the artist our own.

The starting point can be a news heading, a joke, a comic strip, a sequence from *Star Trek* and *Hitch*, or a play by Shakespeare. It is the willingness to "take it from there", and literally to see how far we can take it, that marks off the educational importance.

Peter Chilver is Head of English at Langdon School, London. His new book *Teaching Improvised Drama* was reviewed in the TES of 16 June.



# An Ulster childhood

Andrew Dall looks  
back nearly a century to his 'strict  
and primitive'  
 schooldays in County Down

In June, 1968, I visited, for the first time, a modern infant school. I was taken round by my daughter, the deputy head, and spent the afternoon there. What I saw gave me the greatest shock of my long life, and moved me to write down some recollections of my own infant school-days, before people forget what drastic changes have taken place in the life-span of only one person.

I was born in July, 1885, in Ulster, in the County Down, near Belfast, of Scottish and English parents, my father having moved there as a marine engineer. He had, by means of evening classes, and long hours of night-study, worked up from workshop apprenticeship, to a minor administrative job, by the time I was born. My mother came from a simple middle-class family, in trade, in Whitby.

Queen Victoria still had 15 years of her reign to run. The peace and quietness of those days had to be experienced to be realized today. We had a Vicar, or Lord Lieutenant, who lived in Dublin, and governed the whole of Ireland for the Queen. He had an army of redcoats with pipe-clayed belts and facings, who drilled in our local park on May 24, the Queen's birthday. At school we were given a whole day's holiday.

I lived with my parents in a house in a long, straight, semi-country road, a "made" road which stopped not far from our house, and continued as an unsurfaced country lane, with hedges and trees on both sides. There were no footpaths or sidewalks, and if one stood in the middle of the road, outside our house, it converged in the distance to a point between the trees, at a distance of about two miles away. At this point of convergence the school stood.

I had to walk this distance, from four-and-a-half years of age, twice a day, rain or shine, winter and summer, on my own. There was no kind of conveyance, except an occasional country cart. If it rained, and it does in Ireland, I got wet and remained wet in school, until my boots and socks dried on me. We thought nothing of it, as it was a normal condition of life. Everyone was alike, including the teachers.

My parents were not poor, but quite comfortably placed, but we all started our school life in the same way. The school was an Irish Board National School, controlled by the British educational authorities in Dublin. The building was like a ribbed barn built in brick; one storey, four walls, and a slate, V-shaped roof. It was about 120ft long and 30ft wide; just one single room abutting on to the road, and the road was the playground.

The narrow ends of the building were blank walls, and the long sides had glazed windows, starting at about six feet from the ground. The narrow end nearest the road had the entrance door, which was boxed round to form a porch. This porch formed a narrow recess, in which we all hung our wet coats and caps. There were some 100 odd all told, including the staff, and the clothes of everyone went there.

Inside, about three feet from the entrance, was a large coke stove, very funny, with an iron funnel up through the roof. It gave out some heat at the door end of the school, but the other end of the building was always freezing.

On cold winter mornings, after we had assembled, we were made into lines, boys and girls together, and made to march swiftly round and round the room to the music played by the piano on the plat-

form. This would get faster and faster and end up in a helter-skelter, but afterwards we were all nice and warm, and the dust was so thick we could hardly see.

At the far end of the room there was a raised platform, about 18 inches high, on which there was the headmaster's table and office, and all the paraphernalia for running the school. He had no privacy, and the piano was there on the platform, right next to him.

It was on this platform that any punishment, meted out to the boys, was executed in full view of the whole school. The girls were never punished physically; how they were dealt with, I never could find out. In the middle of the space, from the platform to the coke stove, were rows of desk-forms, 10 feet long and spaced so that a teacher could walk along behind the seated children.

This left the sides of the building empty; in these spaces, down each of the side walls, stood semi-circles of children,

round a teacher. The class lessons lasted half an hour, and at the ringing of a bell, from the platform, the standing children changed to the seats on the desks-forms, and the seated children took their turn to stand in semi-circles.

The staff comprised a headmaster and several female teachers, some elderly, some young. The headmaster's name was Isaac Harvey, and of the teachers I remember Miss Moore, Miss Alken, Miss Patterson, Miss Stafford, Miss Shaw, and Miss Findley. There were others, but I have forgotten their names. There were sometimes seven, sometimes eight classes, boys and girls mixed.

There were no screens or divisions between classes; we were all together in the one big room. The subjects taught were the usual elementary stuff, given by the blackboard, by endless repetition, and by singing doggerel memory tags. The singing, of course, could be heard all over the room—and outside too—but it made

no difference to the teaching going on the rest of the school.

We went in at 9 am and finished at 12.30 pm; the rest of the day was our own. There was a half-hour break, and we all trooped outside, rain or shine, into the road, to eat our "pieces" school meals in those days. Those who lived nearby went home for a dinner.

As the road was our playground, boys played noisy, rough games, and girls gathered further away, in a back garden, skipping and watching our games from a distance; we never, never came outside school. I remember, very vividly, during my first week, I was struck on the ankle by a large sharp stone, thrown by someone, which so hurt and pained my foot that I could not stand. I started to cry. One of the older girls ran over, picked me up and attended to it and comforted me. When the pain had stopped, I was able to walk about on it, she was



THE IRISH BOARD SCHOOLS

Mary Evans Picture

# Changing places

Gwen Wratten, a village primary school head,  
and Christopher Schenk, a university  
lecturer, recently swapped jobs for a week.  
These are the diaries they kept.

Christopher Schenk is in charge of the one-year postgraduate course for students training to be primary teachers. He took his 17 students on a visit to Oxfordshire schools. Gwen Wratten went back to Liverpool with the students, leaving Christopher Schenk to teach the junior class in her small two-teacher school. The week began with a Bank holiday, giving both participants time to get to know their new surroundings.

## Liverpool Diary

Tuesday. Unreality overwhelmed me as the university mini-bus carried me through Liverpool 8, so familiar 30 years ago and never since visited, to the School of Education. By the time I had arrived, pleasure and excitement were breaking through. I revelled in temporarily leaving school and children, to stand back a little and distil theory from my experience.

In one way or another, the students and I worked on our experiences of teaching. All day. A main part of my brief was to get them talking. The stimulating, shared first-hand experiences of the visit to Oxfordshire schools worked. They talked excitedly, incessantly, questioning, criticising, appreciating shrewdly and fearlessly, forcing me to think through the reasons why I came back to hall in a downpour that ought to have been depressing, but only emphasized my exhilaration at the intellectual stimulation.

Wednesday. This morning most were at general lectures, and I was available for individual meetings. Very important was whether a promising student, who normally wears earrings and a cord jacket, should hide his personality in a borrowed suit to increase his chances of securing a job. He reached a compromise decision, to remove the earrings and get the jacket cleaned.

In the afternoon we worked on the difficult business of classroom control. After an hour and a half of problems, followed by a tea-break, we rounded off with one teaching practice success story each. All but one of the reminiscences concerned the passing of learning initiative from the teacher to the children. This is a discerning group.

Thursday. This was a day of role play and case histories. The discussion ranged widely, touching on social and political issues, and matters relating to teachers' unions, techniques of observation, parental involvement, ancillary and auxiliary services, roles of the teacher and many others that I have already forgotten.

One of the things I reflect on, coming in tonight, is how relaxed and energetic I feel. I know it is the stimulation of working with lively adults on real expertise, of having only one straightforward part of Christopher's job to do and being able to do it without interruption.

Friday. I discovered that my train left Lime Street at 3.20 pm. I asked permission to leave at 2.50 pm, the time when we had promised a minute of grateful, supporting silence for the student of the cord jacket at his interview. Success of any member of the group would keep hope alive for the others.

There was enthusiasm for an early start to the weekend; but when I left no one accompanied me. Bright eager voices talked on compulsively. Maybe they are talking still as my train draws into Oxford?

## Bladon Diary

Tuesday. I'd quite forgotten that teaching juniors is so tiring. As I look through the register after school I find to my shame that I can't put a face to every name. It's getting to know them that is the tiring bit.

I find myself attempting to establish control at the same time as building relationships, and trying to engender enthusiasm for the topic I've introduced. As well as all this I'm anxious not to let anyone get away with second best, but I don't yet know what to expect from each child. None of which was helped by three very wet playtimes.

I am beginning to appreciate the trials of a teaching head. After a bubbly morning with children working individually, and a lunch time spent signing a spate of astonishingly trivial forms, I manage to settle the children down to some quiet work when a builder arrives to discuss alterations to be made to the school. I leave the room to talk to him, and bang goes the quiet working atmosphere.

Wednesday. Having often extolled to my students the virtues of using the immediate environment, I felt obliged to practise what I preach, and yesterday I started the children on work connected with one of the trees in the school yard. Today, much to my relief, is fine and the children work well inside and outside the school.

The buildings present certain problems. There are three working areas, each too small to accommodate the whole class without congestion, so with some children outside as well, I try to be in four places at once.

After break we go by coach to a swimming pool. An instructor takes the swimmers while I get in the pool with the non-swimmers. This gives me a valuable chance to get to know a few more individuals and (perhaps more important) it gives them a chance to get to know me.

By the afternoon it is really warm. The part-time teacher is coming, so we decide to take the children together into the park to sketch trees.

Thursday. By this time I am beginning to sort out in my mind this incredibly diverse class of 30 individuals, with widely differing ages, backgrounds, temperaments, abilities and interests. The part-time teacher is here for the whole day, so I take out a group of eight children who would particularly benefit from more individual attention.

One of them noticed a tree in the park yesterday that looked like a monster. We use this as a starting point for a story, which is developed into a play with musical accompaniments. At the end of the afternoon this is just about ready to show to the infants, who prove to be a suitable, receptive and uncritical audience.

Friday. Another rainy day in which a number of things are nearly finished off, including the play. I begin to have great sympathy for my students on teaching practice. Taking over a going concern, inheriting someone else's rituals and standards is quite different from organizing a new class into your own ways in September. I shall return to Liverpool next week full of anecdotes and humility.

Gwen Wratten is head of Bladon Primary School, Oxfordshire. Christopher Schenk is lecturer in primary education, University of Liverpool.

back to the huddle of girls. I remember her very well, but not her name.

The teachers were there to teach. They were not concerned about our health, and nor were we; our teeth or feet were not examined, and there were no doctors interested in us. Nor were they concerned with feeding us or supplying us with free books; all these aspects of our welfare were considered the responsibility of our parents, who expected the teachers to teach, and nothing else.

If our shoes got wet, they dried on us; if we had colds, no one cared. We were taught the hard way. The teachers were strict, but not unkind, and had no favourites. They kept order and discipline in their classes by their own personalities. During their teaching they did not seem to be bothered by the headmaster. If a boy required correction, he was sent to the platform, where the headmaster caned him on the hand, without consulting the teacher. He used a little switch, and gave one or two strokes on each hand.

We did not like Miss Stafford very much, she was too hard, and there was no love in her; but we did well in her class. I liked Miss Patterson the best, as she was always cheerful and kind even though she was strict. One day when it was time to go home, the rain and wind were very bad, so she lent me an umbrella. I had never handled an umbrella on my own before, and when I had gone a short way, it blew inside out. I arrived home soaked through, and terrified to be presenting the tangled wreck to my mother.

I have no recollection of learning to read, either at home or at school, but I remember learning to write. I can still see Miss Shaw holding my hand and showing me how to shape the letters. She showed me how to hold and use an ink pen, and copy the script in a Vere Foster copy book.

These copy books were provided by Dublin education authority. We had slate pencils, and slates were handed out at the beginning of each day. To clean them, we spat on them and rubbed them clean with the palms of our hands.

We learnt to spell by chanting two, three, or four-letter words, until they were firmly fixed in our minds. We learnt addition and tables likewise. Reading followed naturally, by finding each word in our reading books, as our teacher read the simple stories very, very slowly to us. She put us on, individually, to more difficult books, as we accumulated enough words in our memories.

The teachers must have been very patient and gentle people, as their classes had clever ones and very dull ones in them. The clever ones forged ahead, and the dull ones lagged behind, but as each teacher had only a few pupils, she was able to give ample time to the dull ones.

We all managed to get into the next class at the end of the year, when the yearly examinations were held. These consisted of a separate verbal examination of each child by a very fearsome inspector sent up from Dublin.

We all had to have on our best clothes that day. Our hands and faces had to be cleaned and polished. I remember watching the others going up on to the platform, but have no recollection of my own ordeal, except that I got through and advanced with the rest. Our own part-time teacher stood by us and helped us through.

During our "lunch" break at 12.30, we always went outside to eat and play—there was practically no traffic on the long main road, and what there was, was very few bicycles, and those were very elementary with solid tyres. We called them "boneshakers". I remember my father trying to ride a Penny Farthing, with poor results. About this time a Mr. Dunlop invented the pneumatic tyre. The early ones were enormous, and caused great excitement, wonder and also much hilarity.

The traffic did not interrupt our games; we were playing marbles, we just stood aside while it passed, and resumed playing. We could see any traffic coming for a very long time before it reached us. Sanitary arrangements at the school were somewhat primitive. There was no supply inside the building, no drinking water or water for washing. The word "toilet" had quite another meaning in those days, and had to do with ladies' hairdressing and things feminine. Using the present-day connotation, there were

none! What the girls did, I never knew, and though curious, I never found out; although boys and girls were mixed in the classes, they were strictly segregated outside the building.

On the outside of the left hand wall of the school, at the far end, there was an enclosure like a back yard, paved and half-roofed, about eight feet square, and connected by a long passage to the road. There was an opening into this yard, from the passage, but no door. Under the half-roof, on the stone floor, was a gutter. The boys' performance of nature's major calls had to emulate the coveys in the byre, while the minor calls took place anywhere outside in the fields or roadways.

There was no privacy and no running water or toilet paper. During the hot summers, this place was very unpleasant and to be avoided as much as possible; even in winters too. Those boys who could "hang-on" until they reached home were fortunate. Any accident in school was frowned on, and sometimes punished.

The days were all very pleasant. In spite of the strictness and primitive conditions, we were all very happy. As far as I remember there was never any trouble, and I never disliked going to school, or even the long two-mile walk. I was at the school for seven years and remember Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, when there was a lot of fuss and jollifications.

We had no school uniform or colours or blazers. Our parents dressed us as they deemed sensible. Some were clean and neat and their parents had plenty of money; some were poor and not so clean, but our parents helped each other. It was the fashion for little girls to have cropped hair like the boys, and they wore "pin-nies" over their clothes, like Lucy in Mrs Tiggy-Winkle by Beatrix Potter. Some girls wore caps like the boys, too.

If you want to know what my home and parents were like, you have only to read *The Forsyte Saga*, or see the television series. All my early days were spent in this era, and my mother was dressed like Aunt Hester, wore a bustle, and held her skirts up off the ground when she walked. She even had a tea-service like Aunt Hester's.

It was my mother who took me, that late September morning, in 1889, when the road was covered with autumn leaves, to this little Irish school. The reason why I went at four-and-a-half, I discovered later, was that my little sister was due to arrive that November.

We walked, my mother and I, on that very first morning, me holding her hand, along that long, long, two-mile country road, ankle-deep in fallen leaves. I can remember the walk vaguely, but well remember finding a ripe apple outside Mr McCausland's orchard.

I have no recollections of any more of that first day, except towards the end, when the headmaster was holding up sweets and other things impounded during the day. He was asking the ownership. He came to a half-eaten apple, and I stood up and claimed it; but he had his doubts and wouldn't let me have it.

All our school books were written with a great Irish bias, and chapter headings and illuminated capitals were taken from the great *Book of Kells*. All the poems and stories were by Irish writers and authors. Our geography and history lessons were all about Ireland, too.

Strange to relate, we had no religious instruction at all, for any form of religious worship. I don't know why; maybe it was thought to belong to the province of the church and the parents (I think they were right), but for the seven years that I was there we had none.

I went up the school, class by class, until I reached the top, and then, at about 11 or 12, I was taken away and sent to the famous old Belfast College, "The Academy" College, a large, remarkable old building in many acres of grounds. I began to study under masters in caps and gowns. We learnt Latin and Greek, and all the usual classical tosh of those days which comprised education.

I was only there for a year. Then we returned to England, and I finished my schooling in Merchant Taylors in Crosby. But I shall never forget my infant and primary school in Ulster.

Andrew Dall died in 1972.















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## Finding the right level

Adrian du Plessis on standardization of terminology

We all know the old joke about psychiatrists needing to be psychiatrists. The same sort of comment can probably be made about many professional groups and I sometimes feel that those of us who work in communications (and here I include language teaching) seem intent on providing evidence for those who would accuse us of needing to work in the field. We display a quite extraordinary resistance to that *sine qua non* of all communication: agreed definitions of basic terminology.

It is perfectly possible to cite numerous examples of the phenomenon, but perhaps the worst example—because it is so common and therefore so important—is the confusion surrounding any discussion of levels in language learning attainment. At present there is no agreement on terminology and the result is a proliferation of terms used indiscriminately and it is quite possible to find a conversation between professionals foundering in confusion when it is discovered that A's "advanced" describes a level which B would be happy to label "lower-intermediate". Publishers are well-placed to help clarify this issue and they ought to do so, in their own self-interest.

Most of the major EFL publishers have found it necessary to create a system of levels to ensure that their publishing is internally consistent (ie that their level 4 really is more "difficult" than level 3) and for

use when briefing authors. These levels could also be useful when describing materials for potential customers, but unfortunately—little thought has been given to the needs of the customers, who are expected to be familiar with different publishers' inconsistent use of (apparently) familiar terminology. It is clearly time for publishers to standardize terminology in precisely the way other industries have been forced to standardize terms and specifications to avoid confusion.

Such standardization is fortunately not a very complex task as it does not involve any of the difficult problems which perplex language testers when trying to assess levels; all we need to do at this stage is agree on terminology, and we are in fact very near being able to do so.

In 1975 a set of terms and levels was announced which was based on research in this country and some important EFL countries abroad. The system was careful to employ terms which were already widely known and used (if inconsistently) and it made a serious attempt to incorporate widely known levels such as the two Cambridge examinations. There is also a shorthand form for use when less detailed definition is adequate:

1 Beginner } Elementary  
2 Elementary }  
3 Lower-intermediate }  
4 Mid-intermediate } Intermediate  
5 Upper-intermediate }  
(First Certificate)

6 Advanced  
7 Proficiency  
(Certificate of Proficiency)

Progress is being made, as these terms are gaining adherence and—just as important—the need to specify levels more precisely is now more widely recognized: several publishers have recently made attempts to label in levels of their publications unambiguously. Unfortunately, however, terms are once again not being used consistently and some highly individual (perhaps consciously individualistic?) variations have begun to appear.

It would be useful for the ELT publishing industry, bookshops, teachers and students if we could agree a standard nomenclature. It would also be a service to English Language Teaching as a subject and thus to the further advance of English as a world language. It may even help us to meet more effectively the increasing competition from American and continental European publishers who have realized what an extraordinary resource the English language represents to those who wish to take advantage of the world-wide demand for it. Or do we have to wait until we have travelled the same route as other British industries which did not recognize that their positions were being eroded by well-organized foreign competition?

## Theory into practice

Christopher Brumfit on teaching methods

A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language. By Willsa McRivett and Mary S. Temperley. Oxford University Press £4.95. 0 19 50220 5

Classroom Techniques: Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language. By Edward David Allen and Rebecca M. Vallette. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich £4.95. 0 15 50767 4

One of the biggest difficulties in the initial training of language teachers is to persuade students that there is not one neat technical answer for each situation. The student frequently wants hard, specific help, with an immediate classroom payoff. His tutor is always apparently trying to tell him off for being "theory", persisting in trying to explain when he should be demonstrating.

Very often, of course, the tutor does fail to relate underlying principles to classroom practice, and few students appear to believe that their teachers are even technical enough. These two books illustrate very well many of the problems of being practical.

What is provided in both these books is the store of techniques which experienced teachers develop over the years, ready to pull out whenever an appropriate situation develops in class. What is not provided—though Rivers and Temperley go as far in this direction as can reasonably be expected—is the full backing of implication, extension, or possibilities for variation, modification, or adaptation which a careful teacher develops instinctively with increase of experience. But without such back-up the good teacher will survive, as always, and the worst teacher will be strangled.

Over the years "ten people have matched Willsa Rivers' ability to relate theory and practice effectively in foreign language teaching. She has usually managed to be ahead of fashion without ever being impractical or vulgar in

spite of the fact that the *Practical Guide* is one of a series (Professor Rivers has already collaborated in volumes on Spanish, German and French); it is full of useful advice of specific use to English teachers, supported by sensible discussion. The emphasis is on practicalities, but it is clear that anyone who wants to master the techniques of materials design or classroom organization outlined in the book must be prepared to think hard. Any student sent here for ideas would find plenty but would also have to search around—both in the book and in his head—for development, because the book is sufficiently full to demand close engagement from the reader. It would be difficult simply to skim and lift ideas.

It would be much easier to skim and lift ideas from Allen and Vallette, and not simply because the layout is clearer and slightly more attractive. Willsa Rivers and Temperley usually argue as they proceed through the exercises and suggestions, Allen and Vallette tend to present the argument in summary at the beginning of each section and then offer a string of suggested activities. This makes for easier reading, but risks implying that the techniques are more important than

they are, so that the glumidity (where it is—rightly—used) becomes more important than the genuine teaching. Both books are clearly based on the assumption that teaching is a great deal more than the application of a set of techniques, and the latter is nearer the end of the scale. It is also more conservative in its approach, reflecting the fact that it is the second edition of a book first published (as *Modern Language Classroom Techniques*) in 1972. The major changes since then are the inclusion of techniques for English teaching, and the inclusion of "a wide variety of communication activities". The overall impression, however, is that the authors are happier with itemized rather than integrated procedures, and are concerned with developing accuracy a great deal more than fluency. Rivers and Temperley, in spite of a rather curious division into two parts in which "Communicative" is distinguished from "The Written Word", see the teacher's role as one of developing fluency and accuracy together, and include techniques for extensive work on both. Their book will be an invaluable reference book for any trainee or practising EFL/ESL teacher. The other book will also be useful, the ideal would be to possess both.

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## Normal mixture special vocabulary—and stir?

H. G. Widdowson on English for special purposes

The Language of Accounting in English. By Sandra Castlough. The Language of Restaurants and Catering in English. By Eugene J. Hall. European Schoolbooks Ltd. English for Careers Series. £1.65 each  
Special English for Business. By Sharon Abrams and Hugh G. Wales. Collier Macmillan. £2.00. 0 02 51390 2

English for Your Business Career Book 1. By Alan R. Bersley and Philip Bedford Robinson. Collier Macmillan. £2.45. 0 02 51390 2

English for Doctors and Nurses. By J. Parkinson. Heinemann. £1.95. 0237501384

English for Secretaries. Heinemann University Press. Student's Book £2.20. Teacher's Book £3.90.

English and Note. By Keith Purvis. Heinemann Educational Books. Student's Book £1.25. Teacher's Book £2.00.

These books are recent additions to the rapidly growing list of published materials for the teaching of English for special, or specific, purposes (ESP). Work of this kind, progressing everywhere these days, is based on the belief that language-learning materials can be custom-made to meet the requirements of particular groups of learners, whether these requirements are occupational, as with secretaries, businessmen, accountants and so on, or academic, as with students following specialist courses of study in higher education. Essentially, the approach is one which shifts language learning from its traditional context in general education to a more direct relationship with practical training. This ought to have the effect of depriving the language of its independent status as a subject, which in turn ought to make it easier to reappraise its aims and methods. But the profitability of this approach has been more readily recognized than its pedagogic implications as a number of problems emerge in what

ESP has an immediate prima facie appeal. In the first place, it would seem to lead to greater effectiveness of effort: if you know what kind of language you need to cope with in their occupational or academic concerns, makes sound economic sense to concentrate on that kind of language rather than on any other—an argument which has an attractive ring to it. Secondly, ESP is, on the face of it, more intrinsically motivating than "general" English since students will be aware of the immediate relevance of what they learn to their ultimate purpose in learning.

As an examination of these books shows, however, there are certain caveats which should lead us to treat such claims with caution. Perhaps the most cardinal of these is to do with how different "kinds of language" are to be characterized. What is "the language of accounting in English"? What is "the language of restaurants and catering in English"? One answer generally favoured by the books under review is that these are varieties of English usage: different ways of manifesting the syntactic and lexical resources of the language as a whole. According to this view, what is to be taught for the special purposes is not the special vocabulary but the special structures and vocabulary which occur in the particular language variety. Particular concern to the learner is the case of the "English for

Careers" series: it is the vocabulary which recovers the main emphasis, as is made quite clear in the foreword: the series is "intended to introduce students of English as a foreign language to the terminology of a number of different professional and vocational fields"—a statement of intent which, we might note, implies a concentration on English learning as an independent operation. The series is directed at the "high intermediate or advanced level" and it is assumed that students will have learnt all the syntax they need and that all that is required now is the special vocabulary to go with it. The principal goals of the learner, we are told, should be mastering specialized vocabulary, using the language patterns in a normal mixture, and improving their ability to communicate effectively in English. The implication here, borne out by the design of the books, is that if students can add special words to their "normal mixture" of syntax (and so on) then they will be able to communicate effectively in English.

Each teaching unit starts with a glossary of "special terms". An example from the first unit of *The Language of Accounting in English* reads: "Cash flow: the actual receipt and expenditure of cash by an organization." This is then directly followed by a section called "vocabulary practice". An example: "What is cash flow?" Answer (paraphrasing the actual receipt and expenditure of cash by an organization). It is not immediately obvious how this kind of thing contributes to the mastery of vocabulary. The next section then offers a reading passage which is a detailed information about some aspect of the career concerned and this is followed by a section called "discussion" consisting of comprehension questions. For example: "What does accountability frequently offer the qualified person?" Since the first sentence of the passage reads "Accountancy frequently offers the qualified person an opportunity to move ahead quickly in today's business world", the student needs to do copy. This could hardly be described as "discussion". It is hard to see how automatic repetitions of this kind contribute to an improvement in the ability to communicate.

The books in the *Special English* series have a concern with vocabulary but they deal in structures too. The unit here begins with a dialogue which aims both to represent a natural exchange and also to provide a context for structures to be practised in exercises which follow. Then comes a reading passage followed by questions and vocabulary practice. Both dialogue and passage are essentially devices for the exemplification of "contextual presentation", the practice calls for the student to use the structures in the dialogue. The dialogue, for example, is not used as a model from which to derive role play exercises for developing interaction techniques.

And although the comprehension questions on the written passages are often quite subtly composed, there is no consistent attempt to develop reading strategies from them. The implication again is that participating in conversation and processing written discourse are really a matter of recovering meanings from words and sentences.

Much the same is true of *English for Your Business Career* which has an even more intensive concentration on structure and provides not only practice but explanation as well. The books are divided into chapters which present, through narrative and dialogue, stories about events and people in a fictional "business" context. The general argument is familiar: business stories have no intrinsic interest as stories, not are they a very convincing simulation of business activity. They are clearly devised to manifest language rather than to realize it.

as communication. The emphasis is squarely on grammar. Each passage is preceded by a section called "Build-up"—a lengthy demonstration of the grammatical point to be dealt with (defining relatives, past perfect tense etc.) and after the passage there is another lengthy demonstration of the same point, now called "grammar notes". The difference in function of these two sections is elusive. The concentration on grammar is clear enough, however, from the language content of the exercises which follow the grammar notes. Sometimes it is drawn from the passage but often sentences are composed on any random topic that serves as a convenient vehicle for the structures. Thus in exercises appended to a passage on the marketing of a new product we find:

I'm looking for a small boy. He has a red and blue school cap. The plane was landing. It caught fire.

One would not be too surprised to find a cat on the mat or a postillion struck by lightning in such company.

*English for Doctors and Nurses* is quite explicitly a grammar practice book. It consists of detailed, and often defective, explanation of usage ("tense is time", "adverbs tell us more about verbs, adjectives and other adverbs") and copious exercises. The reason for this, I assume, is to demonstrate relevance and so to encourage doctors and nurses to brush up their general grammar as a necessary prerequisite for using English for their professional needs. But the book gives little guidance in actually using English for such purposes. One could in fact produce the same book for, say, accountants, by replacing "urinate", "amputate" and "rheumatoid arthritis" with "credit", "debit" and "limited liability".

All of these books seem to share



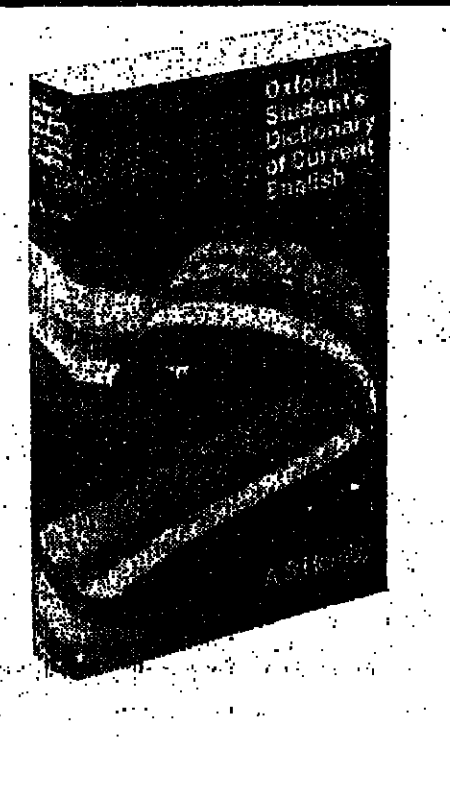
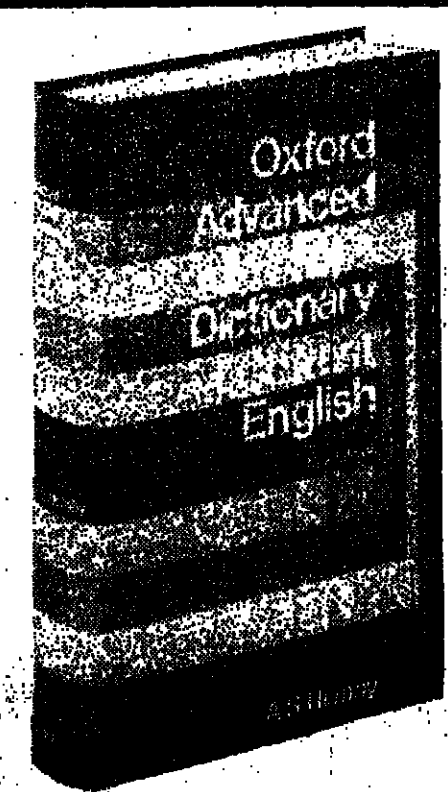
with varying degrees of conviction the same underlying assumption that language is essentially reducible to lexis and syntax and that the learning of language is a matter of knowing what words mean and how they are ordered in sentences. They do from time to time provide approximate instances of discourse but these are really exemplifying devices, there is no real attempt to process the discourse as such, to participate in actual communicative behaviour.

But if one thinks of "the language of catering" or "the Special English for business" and so on as modes of language use, as particular ways of realizing linguistic resources for communication, then the learning of syntax and lexis is only justified to the extent that they facilitate the development of

discourse processing abilities. They have to be accountable. None of the books so far mentioned really comes to grips with the problems of reading or conversational interaction, with the ways in which a knowledge of language is actually exploited for particular professional or occupational purposes.

Other books, however, do. *Read and Note* is one and *English for Secretaries* another. The first by the subtle exploitation of short passages aims at developing strategies for reading and note-taking. The second relates linguistic items to occupational activities which provide them with their justification and value: the language is put to work in the realization of a secretarial role.

In both books language loses its independent status and becomes appropriately subservient to a communicative purpose. The concern is not just with what language is used but how it is used, on how to be something in English—a student of science or secretary or whatever, other than just a receptacle for language. Furthermore, since the focus of attention is on the actual academic and occupational behaviour which has to be serviced by a knowledge of English, this allows for more meaningful student participation in the learning process. Both of these books seem to recognize, as the others do not, that in ESP it is the speciality of the purpose rather than of the English that needs to be stressed and that it is this rather than the imposition of a language learner role (a role frequently felt to be demeaning) which is likely to lead to a recognition of relevance and the necessary motivation for learning. The cost-effectiveness of ESP crucially depends on the development of an appropriate pedagogy. *Read and Note* and *English for Secretaries* make some contribution to this development. The other books reviewed here, on the whole, do not.



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## Up to standard

Donald Hawes on books for beginners and Proficiency students

**Practice in Proficiency English.** By Sheelagh Kane. 12.10. 237 50185 6. English Alive 1. By Sandra Nichols, Patrick O'Shea and Tony Yeouan. Edward Arnold £1.30. 7131 0115 6. English Alive 2. Teacher's Book. By Sandra Nichols, Patrick O'Shea and Tony Yeouan. Edward Arnold £2.95. 7131 0120 2. Contact English 2. Students' Book. By Colin Granger and Tony Hicks. Heinemann Educational £1.80. 435 28068 6.

**Vital English.** By M. L. Morgan and J. J. Percil. Macmillan Education £1.80. 331 22310 1. Creative Reading and Writing. By F. Merat and M. Fahre. Cassell. £1.95. (Without answers £1.50). 304 30036 5.

In her previous book, *Advanced English Composition*, Sheelagh Kane dealt with essay-writing for the Cambridge Proficiency examination, and in this new one, *Practice in Proficiency English*, she tackles the written exercises that form the rest of Paper 1 and the whole of Papers II and III (Reading Comprehension and Use of English).

A wide variety of work is included, including the answering of multiple-choice questions, summarizing, comprehension, appreciation of prose style, and most demanding of all—the writing of letters and journalistic reports in appropriate modes.

The book seems to be meant for students following an extensive course, since the author suggests that part one should be worked "in the first year of the proficiency course" and indicates that part two, which is more difficult, aims to bring them "up to the high standard" of the examination. Students will need careful guidance through the eight sections (four in each part), each of which includes exercises and advice concerning a number of different skills. Sheelagh Kane's purpose is obviously to make students continuously and simultaneously aware of the varied practice necessary to become fully proficient. It can be unhelpful and misleading to compartmentalize EFL textbooks, but there is a danger that some students may become confused by her approach, which could perhaps have been further clarified by a more generous use of spacing by

the printers. Her material, however, is usefully drawn from past examination papers and twentieth-century fiction and non-fiction. Some errors need correction; the plural of "terminus" (page 82), the misplacement of "neither" (pages 82, 88), "than" (page 88), and the spelling of "dependent" (page 103) and "humorous" (page 131).

Books preparing students for the Certificate of Proficiency are inevitably and justifiably restricted by examination requirements, but lately there has been a good deal of innovation shown in books for EFL students in the earlier stages of learning the language. The printed text may be supplemented by tapes and cassettes and enhanced graphically and typographically with drawings, diagrams and layout in general. At the same time, the thought devoted in recent years to the devising of syllabuses has resulted in some ingenious and purposeful schemes of work that should be of real service to students and teachers alike.

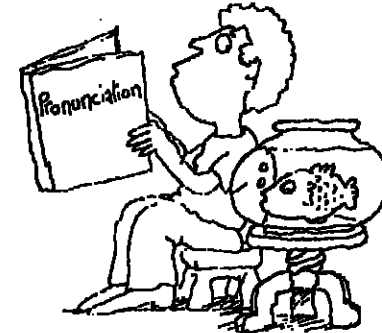
*English Alive* in its complete form is a series of three books, with tapes and cassettes, intended to train students in the basic structures and vocabulary of English. The presentation is attractive, using numerous pictures accompanied by brief, realistic dialogues and controlled exercises. As the authors point out, grammatical items "form the focus for each unit" (20 in each book), although the approach is also systematically "situational" and "functional". The teacher's books, to judge from the one under review, are helpful and thorough, with clear statements of the aim of each unit and with detailed suggestions concerning presentation of the material and further practice.

Typical pages in the unit dealing with the past simple, "wh" questions, making polite inquiries and expressing annoyance give no fewer than nine recommendations about presentation followed by oral and written exercises in comprehension and question-and-answer work. Students who methodically work through this series will be sure to lay a firm foundation for more advanced study. *Contact English* (with tapes) is meant for adult learners, and its two stages form a course that takes absolute beginners to intermediate level. Visually, the students' book is striking, since it is packed with illustrations and often humorous drawings with captions and dia-

logues, illustrating brief scenes in structures, vocabulary and grammar. It also uses extracts from a newspaper, a horoscope and a menu. There is plenty of material here as well as a systematic coverage of necessary knowledge and skills, including colloquialisms, applications for jobs, the date and time to fill up a form, and so on. The book is well illustrated and the layout is attractive. It is concerned with one "topic" (for example, temporal relations) and is predominantly factual and unit dealing with dates, periods, events, amongst other things, practice in reading dates, coming sentences about birthdays, the zodiac, answering questions, extracts from the Radio Times, the theatre seats, and historical facts about American presidents. This book, which covers a wide range of information and practice, is not ideal and, above all, relevant to today. Unfortunately, some of the material is dated, and frequently made to pupils at events of the mid-seventies, but I hope that the authors will be able to revise it regularly.

*Creative Reading and Writing* aims to train overseas students in reading and writing at intermediate and intermediate level. It contains 18 passages, graded in order of difficulty, each followed by over 20 questions in the form of comprehension, sentence construction, summary, and so on. The material is interesting and worthwhile in itself, and is taken with suitable simplification from modern English and American sources—an interview with Pinot, a report on Groucho Marx, a letter from E. B. White, a letter from E. B. White, a letter from E. B. White. The welcome emphasis is on reading passages of whole and making the student "conscious" of the language. This carefully organized book is both serious and lively. It could be profitably used by many EFL students, including those preparing for the Certificate of Proficiency.

When a student finds himself unable to make a given sound, Mr Drummond advises the teacher to explain how the sound is made and then require the student to imitate it. The advice continues: "when the student can say the sound quite well, he can combine it with other sounds." We feel bound to ask what happens if the student still cannot do it, and the best we shall get from Mr Drummond is the warning, "you may need the patience of Job". Nor has Mr Thompson any help to offer us in this matter. Miss Baker has doubts about the value of articulatory description and offers us instead what she describes as notes and illustrations. To avoid the confusion arising from spelling she offers pictures of items for students to name. She keeps exposition to the minimum and her advice to the teacher is sparse indeed.



Mr Drummond's suggestions for the teacher include brief statements about English sound production and distribution. His sections on stress and intonation are more detailed and he advocates reading dialogues aloud, choral work, beating time for rhythm and "conducting" for intonation. Mr Thompson discusses stress-placement rules and refers to these aspects of language. It is less useful with classes of mixed nationality where a more comprehensive coverage may be found within the covers of a single book such as Mr Drummond's or Miss Baker's.

Another valuable source is essays by Alan Coren in *The Sanity Inspec-*

## The rain in Spain...

A. J. Baird on pronunciation

**English Pronunciation and Speech Practice.** By Gordon Drummond. The Regency, St Augustine's Road, Ramsgate, Kent £1.75.

**Learning to Pronounce English.** By Lionel Thompson. Evans £1.45. Teachers' Book £2.10. **Ship or Sheep?** Introducing English Pronunciation. By Ann Baker. Cambridge University Press £2.00. Cassettes 1, 2 and 3 £6.50 each. **Clusters.** 90p. **Contractions.** 75p. **Link-up 70p.** **Stress Time 90p.** **Weak Forms 90p.** By Colin Mortimer. Cassette £5.00 each. Cambridge University Press.

The idea has caught on that a textbook is a tool, most effective in the hands of a teacher who knows how to use it, and writers of textbooks nowadays ask themselves whether their work needs the support of a teacher's book or will get by with no more than an introduction.

Mr Drummond has chosen the latter alternative, devoting 26 pages to advice and suggestions for the teacher and the remaining 56 to exercises for the student. Mr Thompson opts for the accompanying teachers' book, which confines itself to discussion of the segmental sounds of English with a brief section on stress and a very inadequate couple of pages on intonation. Miss Baker's book is more lavishly illustrated and well laid out, each unit containing a short section on stress and intonation, but has only a brief introduction.

When a student finds himself unable to make a given sound, Mr Drummond advises the teacher to explain how the sound is made and then require the student to imitate it. The advice continues: "when the student can say the sound quite well, he can combine it with other sounds." We feel bound to ask what happens if the student still cannot do it, and the best we shall get from Mr Drummond is the warning, "you may need the patience of Job". Nor has Mr Thompson any help to offer us in this matter. Miss Baker has doubts about the value of articulatory description and offers us instead what she describes as notes and illustrations. To avoid the confusion arising from spelling she offers pictures of items for students to name. She keeps exposition to the minimum and her advice to the teacher is sparse indeed.

## Hints and tips

Nigel Richardson on supplementary reading material

Comprehension and usage textbooks for teenage and young adult intermediate students of English tend to be rather earnest in tone, usually consisting either of extracts from literary classics or of newspaper items packed with factual information.

But there is no shortage of suitable material. Stories need to be chosen carefully. Some contain too much slang or highly idiomatic English, but a teacher who prepares the lesson properly can simplify and adapt many of the obscure references. The art of ad libbing textual alterations while reading aloud comes quickly with practice. Detailed vocabulary needs listing carefully, but the great advantage of short stories and humorous essays in this type of work is that they are the right length to be written up as homework, and if the student can be sent home with the original text at the end of the course, he will probably be able to cope with it. The sense of achievement is considerable.

Another advantage in such work is the insight it gives students into the elusive "British sense of humour". I have found that Italian and Swedish children in particular seem to adapt very quickly to it; German and Austrian are often baffled, and the French and Spanish are not sure whether they appreciate it or not.

A great favourite is material from the *My World* radio programme—stories by Frank Muir and Denis Norden (two hardbacks from Eyre Methuen or one paperback from Macmillan). That peculiarly British form of humour, the pun, needs to be explained carefully as does the way in which the programme works, but many a class will tackle these with immense enthusiasm. The story of the Post Office tower walker who did not realize that the restaurant revolved, and Frank Muir's various cataclysmic adventures in the world of cooking are particular favorites, and have resulted in written work of a very high order.

Another valuable source is essays by Alan Coren in *The Sanity Inspec-*

tor and *Golfing for Cats* (both Coronet paperbacks). "Owing to circumstances beyond our control 1984 has been unavoidably cancelled" is a delight for anyone familiar with the original novel, the satire on how the British would cope with a Dunkirk-style evacuation today is always popular, and the hard-hitting comments on Spanish package holidays can stir up some light-hearted controversy. This material is much more difficult than the *My World* stories, but can provide a valuable basis on which the teacher builds a story with a similar plot.

A book which covers a great deal of interest is Humphrey Berkeley's *The Life and Death of Rochester Smear* (Davis Poynter). The author was rusticated from Cambridge for two years in 1950 for inventing a fictitious public school, Selhurst, and sending a series of letters from its headmaster, Smear, to the heads of famous public schools. He requested such information as references about French assistants, effective rat poisons and how to engineer a visit from Royalty. Replies varied from the puzzled and outraged to those who saw through the ruse and gave as good as they got.

One needs to explain, of course, a little about the stereotype character of the 1940s British public school headmaster (see Anthony Sampson's *Anatomy of Britain*), but the audacity of the plan and the range of ideas it produced can be an excellent basis for a project in which the students devise a plan and letters of their own—with an embargo on all posting clearly understood.

Excellent short story material includes Evelyn Waugh's *Mr Lovejoy's Little Outing*, which will produce a heated discussion on the desirability of releasing murderers, Agatha Christie selections from Poirot and Miss Marple, and two Dick Francis horse-racing thrillers, *Nightmare* and *The Rape of Kingdon Hill*, which first appeared in *The Times* Saturday Review, a source of valuable highbrow material.

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For further details please write to  
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Walton Street, Oxford OX2 8DP, England

## Role-speak

**Functions of English.** By Leo Jones. Cambridge University Press £1.95. 521 21467 X. Well Said. By J. Dixey and M. Hingwood. Pinguin English Language Courses, c/o University of Kent. £2.40.

The functional approach to the teaching of English has already begun to manifest itself in textbook form. The supposition behind *Functions of English* is that, besides knowing the grammar and lexis of a language, the student must be conscious of his social and psychological roles, the setting in which he plays himself and the demands which the topic places upon his choice of language. The material is provided to make the student aware of the range of language used in different situations, for example, the language of the classroom, the language of the office, the language of the shop, the language of the hospital, the language of the court, the language of the church, the language of the theatre, the language of the cinema, the language of the radio, the language of the television, the language of the newspaper, the language of the magazine, the language of the book, the language of the letter, the language of the postcard, the language of the telegram, the language of the telephone, the language of the fax, the language of the computer, the language of the internet, the language of the mobile phone, the language of the satellite, the language of the space station, the language of the moon, the language of the planets, the language of the stars, the language of the galaxies, the language of the universe.

The presentation sections, which are usually three to each teaching unit, provide the learner with some useful expressions. There is, of course, an element of choice, but the expressions given are always relevant and often necessary. The practice sections which follow each presentation section vary from exercises which are controlled by the teacher to those designed for group activity. There are suggestions for group work, role-play, and other activities. The book is a publication of the

A. J. Baird

research development unit of Pinguin Language Courses whose headquarters are in Canterbury. Like *Functions of English*, it is intended for advanced learners and the emphasis is placed on oral work, though it is less attractively produced and the illustrations are not always clear. It offers, however, something that *Functions of English* does not—a wide stylistic range. There are 20 units each of which is headed by a summary of the teaching points to be covered. Examples of these points in so-called context are given, but the context is often barely indicated and the teacher will have to fill it in himself.

*Well Said* provides for more overt control by the teacher than the first book does. This is not necessarily a bad thing, since one of the dangers of less teacher-controlled learning is that students often find themselves practising sub-standard English and picking up each other's mistakes.

*Well Said* offers a wide variety of approaches in teaching, which include mini dialogues, the meaning of which is to be analysed by the student, intensive dialogues in which one speaker's part is to be pre-recorded and the student is expected to respond to it, and what the authors refer to as "controlling registers"—though most linguists would prefer the word "styles"—and dialogues of a more conversational nature which allow the student to complete them in whatever way he thinks appropriate. The device of setting the students to write their own dialogues is perhaps less useful and of rather doubtful linguistic value. Nevertheless, *Well Said* is a stimulating and practical teaching aid.

## In and out of English

Paddy Bostock

**Advanced English for Translators.** By Dennis Chamberlain and Gillian White. Cambridge University Press £16. 521 21630 3.

This book is intended to give upper intermediate and advanced students practice in translation both for their own sake and for proficiency purposes. The dual aim is reflected in the texts chosen, for although most come from a wide variety of sources, in order to offer a broad selection of different styles and registers, they are also taken from past Proficiency papers.

Each unit contains one text page, followed by exercises to provide practice in problems of style, tone and usage and help present some of the mistakes in English frequently made by foreign learners. In the context of translation work, this additional focus on common problem areas can be extremely helpful, because it directs the learner's attention not only to particular difficult expressions in English but also, inevitably, to a comparison with the structure of his own language. This approach will aid the student for grammatical understanding and thus facilitate translation.

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Already available in this four part course are *Starting Out*, *Getting On* and *Turning Point*. The fourth and final part, *Open Road*, will be available at the end of 1978. Each book represents about a year's work and the course is structured to provide for entry at any level. As well as the books there is a variety of supplementary material including tapes, cassettes, filmstrips, workbooks and test packs.

For further details and a prospectus please write to English Language Teaching Department, Oxford University Press, 1978 Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

## Package workdays

Paddy Bostock on short courses

Streamline English. By Bernard Hartley and Peter Viney. Oxford University Press Student's book £2.50. 19 432221 1. Teacher's book £1.50. 19 432222 X. Cassette £5.00. 19 432225 4. Freeway. By Chris Toffi. Macmillan Education £2.50. 333 24160 6.

It seems likely that we shall be seeing more short English courses for foreign students in this country and this for economic and political rather than strictly educational reasons. Many overseas students are now finding Britain, and London in particular, a very expensive place to live and study in and are beginning to consider the advantages of going to the United States for courses instead. Furthermore, if government quotas on foreign students are imposed on state colleges involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language, then such colleges will be forced to close down full-time courses, unless they can find enough prospective students prepared to pay the unsubsidized fees, which would be in excess of £3,000 p.a.

Both of these factors could give rise to a corresponding increase in the number of either part-time or short courses offered by both private and state schools in an attempt to stem the potential drift away from Britain and, in some cases, simply to survive. This, in turn, may lead to English becoming more and more of a neatly-bound, attractively-packaged product to be sold in the market place along with British Leyland cars and North Sea oil. English, as Professor Quirk and others have recognized, is one of our major exports, yet it looks as though foreigners coming to this country will only be able to afford it in relatively small doses. So short courses appear to be a growth market.

Two books seeking to establish themselves in this market are *Streamline English* and *Freeway*. *Streamline English* is a beginner's course which, ambitiously, in my view, claims to take students to intermediate level in three to four weeks, by working through the 80 individual units, each of which provides material for a 50-minute lesson. There is an accompanying cassette and a teacher's book, which includes detailed lesson plans for each unit.

The material has been developed and used with apparent success at the Anglo-Continental's summer

courses in Bournemouth and is intended for adults. It follows a routine sequence of structural items introduced unit by unit and getting up to the present perfect by the end of the book.



The problem is that, in order to appear up to date and attractive to adults, the book has been crammed with photographs of real people doing things, and large, sometimes full-page drawings of cartoon figures. The effect of this is that it appears to contain more illustrations than to contain more of the language exercises (even the cartoon pictures) and, although this may appeal to the average four-week summer-course student, it does leave the impression of being a little thin on originality of presentation. The idea seems to have been to add lots of glossy pictures to the usual dialogues and grammatical material and hope that the whole will package attractively. Unfortunately, there appears to be little radically new beneath the gloss, the dialogues and drills not being much different from any others.

It is extremely difficult for writers of beginner's books for adults, given the structural and lexical limitations imposed on them, to strike an adequately mature note, although including Howard Hughes, Richard Nixon, Elton John (John?) and Bruce Springsteen. The book does, in a healthy way, step down the road away from Janet and John. The trouble is that these are

cardboard figures, who are jolly enough in their way and good for a laugh with younger students but who cannot be exploited in such a way as to satisfy the more sophisticated learner. Some beginners in English are, after all, Doctors of Philosophy in their own countries.

*Freeway*, designed for intermediate or advanced students, has the leeway that extra structures and vocabulary allow, and succeeds in providing interesting material for the adult level.

The book comprises 20 units based on topics, like cartoon humour (Giles, Reg Smythe, John), or class consciousness, each unit consisting of guided questioning, grammar exercises, reading comprehension, dialogues, controlled and free writing, as well as an interesting and often amusing collection of graphics and text extracted from newspapers, pamphlets, advertising and other sources. However, the supplementary material is kept in proportion and does not therefore overwhelm the teaching items.

Each unit is divided into three levels of difficulty for mixed-ability teaching. The idea being that students have strengths and weaknesses in particular areas of the language and can work at correspondingly easier or more difficult exercises in the different units. The topics chosen bear examination not only in their own right, but also taken as a whole, for they then provide a fair, composite picture of what Britain is like—or at least, as much as could be reasonably absorbed in a four-week summer course.

There are sections on equal opportunity, ecology and job satisfaction as well as on pills and beer and English country houses, so that the course has a valuable educational content. In addition, the grammatical items seem to spring naturally from their contexts.

This is a salutary lesson for any textbook writer who chooses to structure first and then tries to manufacture texts that contain them. *Freeway* succeeds, at least in part, because of its judicious choice of subject areas in which to teach language items. It makes excellent teaching material because a high level of interest and enjoyment can be maintained for both student and teacher, and enjoyment is very largely what summer courses are all about.

## Spare-time tasks

Samphire and Other Modern Short Stories. Zero Hour and Other Modern Short Stories. Edited by Michael Swan. Cambridge University Press £1.00 each.

The dominance of multiple-choice board examinations do not leave much room for stories, at least in the classroom, and this is to be regretted because, although students may be able to operate all manner of tricky linguistic translations, they often miss out on the pleasure of reading.

These two books of advanced and unabridged short stories are hardly radical in their selection—Waugh, Greene, Ford and Thurston among others—but they do offer teachers the much-needed chance to recommend some spare-time reading to students whose minds have been conditioned to taking pine-fuel phonics. It would be a pity where possible, to be able to include such work in the timetable of the form of actual reading, and at least as a basis for discussion of both vocabulary and content.

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## Bearing gifts from Bulgaria

Peter O'Connell on Suggestopaedia

All the unconventional language teaching methods have names that blare in the ears of the student — the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopaedia — but the last brings the most from the brows of language teachers. Who is this Bulgarian bearing strange gifts? He is a language teacher, not even a teacher. Dr Lozanov is indeed not a language teacher. But nor were Skinner or Chomsky. Like them he is a brilliant outsider whose work

is just beginning to take seriously. What is his background and why should we listen to him? Dr Lozanov is a Bulgarian doctor of medicine who practised in Sofia for many years. He became convinced that the success of all psychotherapy comes from the patient's faith in the ability of the doctor. The patient is "suggested" into health by the doctor. Lozanov extended this interpretation to the whole of every culture has a suggestive part that conditions the behaviour of the members of that culture. The suggestive norm in education everywhere is low: learning is difficult, especially the learning of foreign languages with its heavy memory load and its complexities of structure, idiom and phonology. In fact, Lozanov, this is a self-imposed restriction that can be shed when we wake up to the immense unused potential of the human brain, what he calls "the reserve powers". The teacher's main role, therefore, is to "suggest" his students and to help them to accept and work to a much higher suggestive norm.

How does the teacher set about this unfamiliar task? Some of the suggestopaedic principles, though couched in unfamiliar language, have been practised by good teachers since the beginning of time. First of all relaxation: the tensions that block learning must be released before students can use their strong inherent language-learning powers. This is achieved by the authority of

the teacher working through a method that uses fun, gaiety, music and singing and student involvement. Lozanov calls this process "infantilisation", the achievement of a state of mind that is open, plastic, receptive, like a happy child's. Flowing from this is the establishment of a community, a supportive, trusting and creative group that enjoys co-operating in exploring their capacities to use the new language.

One of the most unfamiliar doctrines of suggestopaedia is "pseudo-passivity". Modern language-teaching methods have stressed the importance of activity in the classroom. Most of us when presenting new material engage in a kind of verbal ping pong whether or not we are consciously following the Skinnerian model of "stimulus, response, reinforcement". By contrast, Lozanov's teachers present a huge dialogue (about 800 words) every six hours and during this presentation stage (about 75 minutes) the first reading, and nothing during the second and third readings. Both these readings are done against a background of classical music. During the third reading, the students abandon their books and lean back in their high-backed armchairs with closed eyes. This, Lozanov calls the pseudo-passive concert state and relies upon it for hypernesia, the unforced memorization that he claims for his method. The passivity is "pseudo": the student looms inert in his armchair but in fact, says Lozanov, there is a great deal of activity at a deep level. His relaxation allows his "reserve powers" to operate very productively.

If the student asks before the second "concert" whether he should listen to the music or the words he is told to listen to the music. This apparently illogical procedure exemplifies another important principle of suggestology (the general science of which Sug-

gestopaedia is the application to education). Lozanov in his Research Institute in Sofia has done some work on peripheral learning which indicates that what is picked up on the edge of attention goes into the long-term memory, and oddly enough strengthens over a period of days while consciously learnt material is subject to the familiar curve of forgetting. The application of this principle to the "pseudo-passive concert stage" is obvious and also illuminates other procedures and attitudes in a suggestopaedic course. An orthodox teacher is at first horrified by the suggestopaedic teacher's complacency at the errors and inaccuracies of his pupils. The latter, working to a different psychological model, is more concerned to sustain his student's confidence and to encourage them to communicate than to drill them into forming correct verbal habits.

Suggestopaedia is hostile to all forms of drilling in which the material being drilled is at the centre of attention. Such drilling rapidly becomes boring if it is simple, and threatening if it is difficult. Both boredom and anxiety are inimical to the operation of the student's deeper powers of language learning. In Sofia drilling is disguised as a game, sometimes in friendly competition between teams.

In this same psychological area is the Suggestopaedia teacher's unwillingness to dwell long with any student having difficulties. One is trained in Sofia to move on quickly to someone else and to encourage the light-hearted spirit of the game with emphasis on the message rather than the code. When I was checked very gently, for suggestopaedia applies to teacher training as much as to classroom work for "dwell-ing" is at first queried the objection. Very soon, however, I noticed the swift change in the expression in a student's face when he was moved from "playing with the lan-

guage" to the performance of a linguistic task. The happy open expression was replaced by a wary look, a look that is all too often seen in the conventional classroom. Relaxation in the language classroom rests on security, and security is so easily disturbed by criticism or any form of authoritarianism. The authority which is Lozanov's prime suggestopaedic principle is quite devoid of authoritarianism.



Activity at a deep level.

The teacher's authority must be strong only in order to help the student to escape from his suggestive right-jacket and to enter into some of his natural heritage.

What has been done to embody these principles in classroom procedures and what has been the success of such practical applications? Dr Lozanov as the head of the Research Institute of Suggestology in Sofia is concerned with all human activities: but his main application has been in education—in suggestopaedia. The biggest part of his work in Bulgaria is in teach-

ing all subjects to schoolchildren. In my view this is the most exciting and fruitful field for the application of suggestopaedia and should be seriously considered by the Department of Education and Science for the British system.

The work for which Dr Lozanov has achieved a measure of notoriety in the West has been done in his own institute teaching modern languages to adults. The fact that participants in these courses often have to go to their work places for several hours a day must be emphasized. Any method that was strenuous or exhausting, or boring or frightening would have a high absentee or drop-out rate. In fact, few people drop out voluntarily and lateness is rare. The speed with which a strongly supportive group is established and the warmth of the relationship that builds up are features of suggestopaedia.

The suggestopaedia course book is composed of 10 long dialogues that together form a kind of picturesque play with 14 characters. This is the maximum size of a Suggestopaedia class, the optimum size is 12, and any number below 10 is regarded with disfavour. Each participant takes a new identity—name, address, occupation—and for the duration of the course is known only by that name. The book records the adventures of the 14 characters who are delegates at a conference on "Man and Nature" in London (it is an English course). Each page has the English text on the left, the Bulgarian translation on the right. This flagrant floating of the fundamental principle of the direct method gives great confidence and comfort to the participants and makes possible the introduction of 2,000 words in a course of 75 hours.

continued on following page

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## Literary all-sorts

Rachel Blake on simplified novels

Eighteen titles have so far been issued in the Collins English Library simplified series which mixes classics with modern best-sellers, romance, fast-moving thrillers, sport, wildlife, and tales of endurance. Six levels have been planned, but up to now books at Levels 1 to 5 only are available, at 35p to 60p each.

The aim—and one that seems likely to be achieved—is for enjoyment in reading from the start. The students choose books at the level which they can manage without stopping to check words, and learning takes place at the assimilable and practice levels, and from imaginative and consequently linguistic enrichment without the laborious attempt to assimilate new constructions and vocabulary on the way.

The accompanying guide sets out clearly the principles behind the series, which are based to a large extent on linguistic research carried out by the Council for Cultural Cooperation for the Council of Europe. For instance, advanced words which are vitally necessary at the "tourist" stage are included here, at Level 2, while structures which could cause problems in comprehension are omitted or used at a higher level. "Sets" of words (eg knife, fork, etc) are introduced at one level. International words are regarded as known. (I did win at "kilometres" in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, but at nothing else in the series.)

Finally, browse through the Word Formation Guide and Word List gives a quick picture of the level of vocabulary at each stage and the degree of reinforcement through use of compounds or other variations on basic words. Conveying the original atmosphere and language has been a high priority, and the achievement is creditable, but as to be expected, rather variable. The events of the first four chapters of *Jane Eyre* are encapsulated in one short one,

and the action and conversation seem somewhat jerky and staccato. *Wuthering Heights* and *A Christmas Carol* retain the original quality much more successfully, but then the degree of condensation is much less. In *Pride and Prejudice*, too, Mr Bennett's irony, Mrs Bennett's foolishness and Elizabeth's headstrong nature come over well in the conversation; but since conversation claims a large proportion of the novel in the original it has not been too hard a task.

The fast-moving mystery thrillers such as *White South* and *Brainbox* and *Bull* are sometimes akin to experiencing a speeded-up film—I felt this in the account of the two exhausting weeks of what-killing in the former book—and in nearly all of the latter.

One has to read with close attention, too, since clues and characters are mentioned so briefly, but one is impelled to read on. I found this fascinating. Among the elements with its excellent photographs one of the most successful.

The illustrations marry well with the texts. They have a valuable function in strengthening impact where the impression of atmosphere or character has been lost by condensation. I particularly liked the delicate fantasy of Susan O'Connell's picture in *The Canterville Ghost*. The exercises at the end range from simple crosswords and supplying words to complete the sentences, to more complex discussion questions involving perception and interpretation.

In the further function, for "reluctant" native, or immigrant, readers, in schools, the titles by John Tully and K. R. Crippwell at Levels 1-3, particularly *The Magic Garden*, so will the Inspector Holt books, which, apart from the exciting plots, show a black man in a key position in our society.

## ETIC publications



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Life on China's communes

by G. and P. Corrigan

Rekling

by F. Wood

Common Ground Filmstrips, £3.80

each

Longman, Harlow, Essex.

Ten years ago, visual material from

China was in short supply and gave

at best a partial view. Even five

years ago glimpses of the tourist

circuits easily outnumbered serious

attempts to present a geographical

perspective.

Just how rapidly this situation

has changed can be gauged from

two new Common Ground filmstrips,

each accompanied by a substantial

booklet. Their approaches are dif-

ferent but both qualify as genuine

educational aids by coming to terms

with three previously neglected

facets of the school study of China

—the significance of current every-

day life, the all-pervading influence

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of political, sociological and economic

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*Life on China's communes* is

essentially a geographical, though it

necessarily takes second place

to a kaleidoscope of sociological

and economic detail.

glances which together build an

impressive and sympathetic image

of Chinese urban life.

That the city depicted is Peking

is only of passing relevance, since

the focus is clearly on people

rather than places—and even when

places are shown, the purpose is

often to show light on the people

associated with them. This is an

entirely valid viewpoint, and would

be criticized only because it seems

so out of keeping with the stolidly

geographical editor's introduction to

the series in the handbook.

However, provided that the

information and pictures are used

as a basis for interpretation rather

than as an end in themselves, the

filmstrip can admirably serve the

ideals suggested. Every city can

be seen as a palimpsest of the

aspirations of its builders and

inhabitants, but outside Western

countries those aspirations may be

so unfamiliar that they require

conscious study before the task of

geographical analysis can begin.

The approach used by Frances

Wood should help to free

geographers from the excessively

scholarly viewpoint that has for

too long blinkered their evaluation

of modern China.

## 22 Resources



From "Life on China's Communes".

## Sociological kaleidoscope

by M. J. Clark

*Life on China's communes* by G. and P. Corrigan. Rekling. by F. Wood. Common Ground Filmstrips, £3.80 each. Longman, Harlow, Essex.

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## Custom and Experience

by Frances Farrer

Under the guise of cleaning up Soho (which can be variously interpreted) a partnership of RMI Leisure Enterprises Ltd and Gargling Ltd are developing the area around Coventry Street. Part of this project is called *The London Experience* and is a kind of soft-sell museum for tourists, based on similar experiences in New York and San Francisco.

Lord Delfont of Steppay, chairman of RMI Leisure, emphasizes the need for "family entertainment" in the heart of London and considers that the latest multi-media show at *The London Experience* provides it.

The show (which is hameless) tries to give a picture of London past and present, through slides, film, sound lighting and even real smoke for the Great Fire. Visuals are projected on to seven screens. Sometimes one picture fills all seven, sometimes five or three, sometimes each screen has a different picture; it is occasionally spectacular and generally confusing.

Sill, with concentration it can be enjoyable and even mildly informative. The emphasis is on tourist appeal: *Pearly Kings* and *Queens*, *White Halls*, streets, markets and pubs feature strongly but the presentation works quite well for the serious historical facts that put in brief appearances from time to time.

London's liveried companies are introduced, the seven screens show

seven coats of arms, which fade into another seven, and almost imperceptibly the focus shifts to Dick Whittington and the mood to fairy tale. The Great Fire section is explained through *Peppes* diary, but in case that isn't interesting enough the audience is surrounded by smoke, and red lights, and the crackling sound of fire. *Peppes* is seen writing at a revolving desk.

This Experience seems to have got carried away by its own tricky technology, because the equipment can bombard us with sensory stimuli it is made to do so. The purpose of this sort of exhibition may escape me. The media in this case may speak over from its message, and perhaps the greatest value for children lies in pointing this out.

Other London Experience promotions aimed at children include the Design a London Stamp competi-

tion, crossword competitions and a birthday celebration. *The London Experience* is in Coventry Street, London, W1, telephone 01-437 1533. The show costs £1.50 for adults and 75p for children, and runs for 50 minutes.

*Views of London: Saint Paul's and the City, with policeman and big...*

## Basic grammar crunching

by Brian Hill

French G.C.E. O level Passbook. By Gina Butler, BA. Key Facts series, published by Intercontinental Book Productions, Berkshire House, Queen Street, Maidenhead SL6 1NF. 95p.

The "Key Facts" aids first appeared as a series of cards for quick reference. The *French Passbook* is a closely printed, unillustrated paperback. It makes no claim to be attractive, persuasive or interesting. The key word is *passbook* and only those dedicated to grammar crunching will be tempted.

It is meant for private reference and revision and is in no sense a course. The basic framework of the language is presented in 16 chapters with explanations, short cuts and examples. Themes more relevant to GCE than to CSE are marked with asterisks. The student's attention is justly drawn to "such apparently bothersome trivia" as accuracy in spelling, genders, accents, etc.

Most chapter headings are straightforward and self-explanatory. However, students brought up on a "doing word" instead of "verb" may well encounter difficulties in understanding headings such as "Modal Verbs". The *Passive Voice* and "The Infinitive Mood". The chapters are crisscrossed with grammar in small print with the occasional emphasis in thick black type. The author has tried perhaps too hard to make the grammar into interesting reading. Les anges simont locuavnes is justified by the explanation: "In these cases it is considered that any monkey is likely to be fond of any bananas he comes across."

There is a self-test section at the end of each chapter. Each of the four answers are generally printed next to the questions in heavier type, making it difficult if not impossible, to ignore them before covering them up, as instructed. The tests are the style to decades of O level papers and are presented in a nonsensical way.

"Everyday Basics", chapter 18, pulls together several small but important items necessary in everyday conversation. Numbers, time, measurements, the weather and certain impersonal statements are introduced but, as with all the chapters, there is such a plethora of information that many pupils will be daunted.

The introduction to chapter 18 may not help their flagging spirits. "The focus thus far has been on... the bare bones... of the language." Here the aim is to widen vocabulary and highlight certain "sizzling points of vocabulary" and the faux amis. The section on idioms begins with a warning about their misuse and ends with a very necessary "do courage".

The examination limits remain general and the student must select for himself those relevant to his exam. Most of the advice given is solid and reassuringly simple but occasionally remarks such as "identify the structure involved" and "ensure that every clause contains a finite verb" creep in. The index of four pages seems thin and its terms too narrowly grammatical, so reference and reinforcement is by no means easy.

Towards the end is a "Key Facts Revision" section. Here 30 pages draw attention to the most important points made in the book itself, although it contains only four actual page references. Some of the facts are unusually detailed and some unusually slight.

Gina Butler has produced a detailed French grammar with some functional hints to the examination student. There is a wealth of material here; but it would probably be better exploited by the teacher than by the student on his own.

## On approval

by Gillian Thomas

Toy manufacturers are becoming more conscious of the potential of selling to schools, not only as an outlet for bulk orders but also as a way of introducing their wares to captive consumers. Various special offers are now available.

Fischertechnik sets are being lent free to any school prepared to devote half a day or more to using them. This German construction system starts with simple bricks and wheels that three-year-olds can build up, and leads on to highly sophisticated models.

Airfix are selling project packs direct to schools. Each of the four topics—aircraft, ships, people, Second World War—contains enough materials for a term's work with 40 children. There are teachers' and pupils' notes, 40 model construction kits, glue and paint, and a suggestion list for further investigations. The packs cost from £25 each.

Because of the demand from nursery schools for *Playpeople*, Little Man, have brought out a *Playbox* which contains 43 of these small articulated figures, and more than 100 accessories such as chairs, ladders, buckets and cups. The *Playbox* costs £20.

*Fischertechnik*, Arthur Fischer, 25 Newtown Road, Harlow, Essex. *Airfix Products Ltd*, Hildane Place, Garrair Lane, London SW18. *Little Man*, Swansea Industrial Estate, Swansea.

## Leather attractions

Northampton's Bluecoat School, in Bridge Street, has recently become the Museum of Leathercraft. It houses about 5,000 leather objects including luggage, footwear, gloves, books and manuscripts, saddlery and clothing.

Tanning and shoemaking have been done in Northampton since the thirteenth century and the museum intends to ensure that the "Story of Leather" is told in a form that will prove attractive to especially to young people.

The first display shows the origins and development of leathermaking; further displays show uses of leather through the ages, and a room endowed by the Saddlery Company illustrates the craft of saddle making.

## Radio Humberside

Some Radio Humberside programmes are to be stored in Humberside libraries for reference, and the county council says that ultimately these will be available throughout the area. At present the tapes are kept in the Central Library, Albion Street, Hull, and the director of libraries and amenities, Mr Glyn Roberts, thinks they will be "invaluable to students of local history, providing living history through the spoken word".

## Adjustable lectern

A reading lectern for use with handicapped children has been developed by Kegan Ltd. It is made from three PVC parts which snap on to chromed poles and has a manuscript tray which can be adjusted to the required height and tilted for reading. Wheelchairs can be fitted into the lectern, which is washable and dismantles for storage. The price is £50.

Further information from: Kegan Ltd, Oakfield House, Oakfield Road, Atricham, Cheshire.

## Best chemistry film

The Chemical Society is to give a prize for the best film of the year for stimulating the interest of young people in further studies and careers in chemistry. It is hoped that the establishment of the prize will encourage sponsors and producers. The first award will be made in 1979 for films released in 1977-1978.

The Chemical Society, The Royal Institute of Chemistry, Burlington House, London W1V 6BN.



30

TALKBACK

## Farce or tragedy?

Fred Sedgwick

Some years ago, the chairman of a primary school governing body sat impatiently by while the head asked a candidate for her views on religious education. The candidate was obviously at a loss for an answer, and probably had no ideas on the matter.

Her floundering damaged the inexperienced young head, who was beginning to feel that she and the candidate were chewing more than they could bite off. Suddenly, the county tones of the chairman cut short the inept, soul-searching: "What the head is asking, Mrs A, is: Are you a committed Christian?"

To her credit, the head immediately dismissed the question. Her voice sounded as though she was trying to deal with a very hot potato without spitting it out. But the damage had been done; an improper question had been asked, and although Mrs A was not the right person for the job for all sorts of reasons, she ever-after believed that there was a ban on non-Christians at this school.

Nobody knows, except the rank and file of the profession, quite

the extent to which improper questions are asked at interviews. I have been asked things the honest answer to which would have been "Mind your own business".

For example, another county lady, interviewing me for a deputy headship, noted my single status, and inquired how long it was likely to continue. My answer was delayed, because I spent valuable seconds mentally enacting a fantasy in which I asked the lady how her marriage was going.

I can't remember what I said



eventually, but I do recall her turning to the blushing representative of local politics. One educational administrator in one county was known by sight by nearly all the teachers. Threats against his life were made over pints of beer in saloon bars every night.

This man resolutely trucked one candidate around the county, always asking the same question at interviews for JMI headships: "Mr R—, what do you think of the integrated day?"

Mr R—'s answer, which he developed, varied and embellished over the longish period during which he was applying for headships, until it had the complexity, if not the elegance, of a baroque violin concerto, never got it right.

In spite of this, he was at last appointed to a job. The administrator grimaced at him after the last interview: "Made you, think, didn't it?"

But if the trendy administrator is a problem at interviews, what about an even more peculiar animal? This one knows the world is not what it used to be, and mourns the fact constantly.

The most recent example I saw was a part-time, part-time who worked as a geography master at the local

boys' public school. He had somehow found himself on the governing body of a local JMI with "progressive" leanings, to the embarrassment of the staff, the head, and, eventually, of himself.

The first time I saw him in action, he was troubled by the fact that a candidate had mentioned scullling at university on his application form:

"Now, Mr B—, isn't that a rather individual sport, if I may say so? Not much team spirit, very little esprit de corps, eh? I haven't noticed any scullers at cricket on your form. Don't you think team spirit is important in our schools to foster..."

This man achieves 10 words to the candidate's one, every time. As one of his fellow-interviewers said after appointing just time: "I don't know what he does in the evening, but by god he forgets me."

How far his baleful influence extends over the neighbourhood is uncertain, but if during the past year he has been responsible, say, for the appointment of one head, two deputies and a scale one teacher, shouldn't we be concerned?

Nobody knows what will happen to the Taylor report, with all its recommendations about the role and status of governors. Some heads seem to have reacted paranoically, thinking that their days are numbered. Some governors have ignored the parts of the report that change dramatically the composition of bodies, and which would remove most of our political appointees.

Whatever does happen, something must be done to improve our interviewing system. There are two dramatic elements in many an interview at the moment: the questions are a farce, and the appointment a tragedy.

The issues are too important to be left to self-inflated nincompoops with axes to grind and ideas beyond their station: they need a chance to educate themselves and to see what is needed in the appointments process.

Fred Sedgwick is head of Swing Gate School, Berkhamsted.

## Upgrading the child

Geoff Davies

Within drama, children can take different roles, demanding different language forms. This is very valuable in language development, as its value is limited unless, at the same time, the teacher also takes on a different role which gives the opportunity of influencing the teacher/learner relationship.

Either the learner and teacher have to have roles of equal status or the child's new role has to be that of the expert. In situations of this nature, the teacher can no longer demand information from the children while the children wait for the decisions.

For example, where a class has been working on a project of Normans, I took on the role of king's steward, bearing the king's instructions that he wanted bread (in the role of castle expert) design the most effective out. This situation demanded that I present to me their own ideas, bringing on their past experiences of knowledge, bringing this to bear the problems before them.

The teacher was no longer a repository of all knowledge. The teacher had to ask the questions, not the usual questions such as "Who won the battle of Hastings?", more like "What the best place to build the castle?" "Shall we have round or square towers, questions where there is no one answer."

Another example was when I was having trouble bringing in a harvest from his waterlogged field. I asked the class (30 infants) to had recently spent considerable time on their harvest festival to play the role of farming experts. They had already told me that they knew a lot about farming. They had been sent to solve my problem.

Of course what followed involved some action, but most of the time was spent in trying to answer these sort of questions: "What is the best way to...?" "Where shall we put...?" "Where shall we put...?" and so on... The approach enables a teacher to create an atmosphere in which all contributions are welcomed.

Teachers must and can be very patient with children who find it hard to express their meanings. It is vital that they should be allowed to try, and so encouragement should come high on the list of priorities.

They must also try to get children to be patient with their peers, and the best way to do this is to let them that they value very highly all the contributions that are made. If the children are not faced with a common problem, all suggestions as to how to solve it are valuable, and need to be considered or even tested.

In another drama situation, the class, as members of a village, put on a performance by a village with a determination by a village to decide what action to take. The teacher could not possibly see the answers, and so every suggestion had to be discussed and assessed, or even acted upon. It was the decision of the village to be the decision of the village.

One boy suggested that the village might make the land solid and cease to flow. "But it's not raining," said another. "Well, we'll have to make it rain." "How?" "By having a big naturally caused one or two giant clouds." "A response to a problem naturally caused one or two giant clouds."

However, the idea was taken up, only by the teacher, and, finally, by the rest of the class. This is a key factor. Every suggestion has to be accepted—never dismissed as silly, or ridiculous, or irrelevant to the class for consideration.

In the example mentioned earlier, of designing and building a castle, one little girl suggested a crocodile in the moat. This was accepted. First by all, but was rejected later when the problem was: "Where are we going to put the crocodiles?"

The use of language by children in this role of planners or problem solvers upgrades the child, rather than reducing the authority of the teacher.

Geoff Davies is advisory teacher for Cleveland.

## Improving decision making

Tony Evans

Changes in the organisational structure of schools are often made in a haphazard, unsatisfactory way. Unlike curriculum innovation, where the staff who teach a subject are also involved in planning its contents—drawing up a Mode 3 CSE course, for example—management decisions have a way of descending unexpectedly from above.

I'll give a fictional but fairly typical example. Suppose the staff have been concerned about disruptive behaviour in the lunch hour. At the next staff meeting the head suggests all fifth-year pupils should be excluded from the school building unless it is raining.

The head believes in democratic procedures, and the 60 staff present are asked to comment on this idea. A number of points are made.

Shouldn't this have also applied to fourth-year kids? Wouldn't it be better for the school to provide more canteen and facilities to prevent boredom and disruption? How about a "cool" for the worst offenders rather than a ban on them all?

Teachers start to examine these alternatives in the light of three and four, as a kind of uncontrolled rebellion against the impossibility of a discussion among 60 people.

At this point, the head says to drop into lunch, because it is now 5.30 pm, and the caretaker's leaving presents must be decided on. At the end of all this the head says: "Well, modify his original proposal, but hardly on the basis of a democratic examination of alternatives. Staff who do not like the new arrangements will feel frustrated, and grumble that their opinions were ignored."

At Malmesbury School, we were recently involved in a different approach to decision making. Any

staff interested were invited to join a working party to consider the changing role of the form tutor, and the organisational implications of this for the school.

Eleven staff, including myself, met after school for several weeks, and were able to discuss various options in detail. We were informal in our discussion—I don't think a rigid committee procedure would have worked very well—but we did produce detailed working papers after each session.

Eventually a document was produced, containing several recommendations. All staff were issued with the document, and a staff meeting arranged at a later date to consider the proposals.

One of the suggestions—that form tutor groups should be organized on a mixed-ability basis—was hotly debated. It was clear that people had been able to think carefully about the proposal beforehand, and prepare cogent arguments. Finally, a decision to agree in principle with the proposal was made on the basis of a majority vote.

There was some justifiable criticism of this method of innovation. Some staff felt the document produced by the working party did not fully enough with various alternatives, and that the working party did not represent the whole range of professional expertise within the school.

A "majority vote" method of policy-making might conflict with a head's need to come down to work against majority opinion if he or she thought this necessary for the good of the school.

On the other hand, most of the staff felt they had been more involved in the policy-making process than before, and that the decision had been arrived at on a rational basis.

If more schools can make an effort to critically examine their decision-making methods, this should both improve their teachers' morale and make school organisation more effective.

Tony Evans is now head of Bishop of Exeter School, Guildford. He formerly taught English at Malmesbury School, Wiltshire.

## American week

Charles Weston

Some eighteen months ago, a large firm of papermaking engineers in Bury-Beloit Wisconsin was contacted by our head. The firm has American connections with the town of Beloit, Wisconsin and was asked if it would assist in putting the school in touch with elementary schools in that town.

The names of two schools were telegraphed through to the firm's Bury offices the same day. Since then, both members of staff and children have corresponded regularly; this close contact culminated in an American Week, held recently in the school. It is hoped that at least one of the Beloit schools will hold a British Week.

The aim was to enable the children to gain a broader knowledge and understanding of the life-style of America. A variety of activities were arranged, from visiting speakers, film shows, and musical concerts to a bonfire, which provided the grand finale to the week, with square-dancing and American-style food.

The success of the week can be attributed to the machine of planning, and the rich variety of activities which were arranged. In perhaps, worth noting, a few of these for other teachers or organisers thinking of holding a similar venture.

The American Embassy put us in touch with two expatriate Americans in Beloit, who had offered to speak through the Embassy's speakers bureau. Both came and talked to the children, bringing slides, books, magazines and records. The Embassy also loaned us free film, including a most wonderful one on life in Wisconsin.

A local flag-making firm loaned us two vast "stars and stripes" flags, most useful for display purposes. The Coca-Cola Corporation donated free-of-charge three cases of the most celebrated American beverage for the children's American-style party, as well as an assortment of poster prints of early American advertising material. Other firms such as Pan-American Airways and Thomas Cook also provided posters which were displayed in the hall.

The John Judkyn Memorial Museum, in Bath, has an extensive range of material which may be loaned without charge. The children found the displays of American Indian clothes and weapons, which the museum loaned us, most interesting.

The local school library service provided a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction, brought in and displayed by the schools' librarian himself. Also displayed were collections of American stamps and coins, which one of their staff had gathered over the years.

The children provided the most obvious source of material. Several weeks beforehand they had been told that material would be welcome for display purposes. They responded admirably: stamps, records, books, records, maps, etc. All items were carefully sorted, and most were used.

The week was a success in more ways than one. That the children enjoyed it was obvious when one saw the crowds around the display tables in the school hall.

For the parents, it gave them the opportunity to use their children's expertise to prepare the American-style parties. The teacher came from the mothers of children in the Beloit schools.

For the staff, the opportunity had arisen for them to work together in a variety of ways: sharing work, ideas, writing letters, teaching, and so on.

Charles Weston is deputy head of Exeter School, Bury. He organized the school American Week.

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## National Health Service

## Training Aids Unit

The Unit is involved in the design and production of training materials which range from print to cassette television, for use in the National Health Service. Development of the Unit now requires the recruitment of two new technical officers and one administrative officer.

## Senior Graphics Assistant

## Senior Technician Assistant

## General Administrative Officer

Applicants for the above should have received appropriate training and experience. The post holder will be expected to act in a supervisory/training capacity.

General Administrative Officer grade.

Salary: £3,452-£4,421 per annum London weighting £141 p.a. New entrants to N.H.S. commence at £3,452.

Application forms and job descriptions are available from Miss K. M. Dell, Deputy Director, N.H.S. Training Aids Unit, Hydesville Hospital, Godalming, Surrey.

Closing date for receipt of applications August 25, 1978.

## Resident Houseparent

Required in September at MOUNT TAMAR SCHOOL, PLYMOUTH, for a purpose-built hostel, for 16 maladjusted boys and girls aged 15-18 years.

You should have had experience in a residential setting in organizing and supervising the work of small groups of disturbed boys, and it is desirable that you should hold suitable child care qualifications. You will be one of a small team, and should be flexible and able to integrate into a system which is designed to create a warm and therapeutic atmosphere. You will need to use initiative and possess a sense of humour in order that the children in care come to terms with their emotional and behavioural problems. A one bedroom furnished flat is available. At present the hostel is organized on a five-day week basis and you will be expected to work in the evenings during the week, but would have every weekend free of duties, and there will be a generous holiday entitlement.

SALARY: £1,821-£2,279 (includes latest pay supplement) less £458 per annum for board and lodging charges (subject to review). Application forms obtainable from and returnable to: MR. P. E. JOHN, HEADMASTER, MOUNT TAMAR SCHOOL, ROW LANE, HIGHER ST. BUDAUX, PLYMOUTH, by 22nd August, 1978. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

## DEVON



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First, choose a challenging client group. Next, choose a department which supports its homes, encourages staff development and has an active secondment policy. Then, make sure you have the scope to use your practical, administrative and casework skills. Put simply, apply to us for a post working with adolescent girls. We have several vacancies arising this summer through internal transfers (to increase experience), internal promotions, and people leaving to undertake courses. We are already working toward generally aware staff in our residential division and we anticipate staff in our adolescent unit will form a resource group able to work across the units. Posts becoming vacant are:

- Officer in Charge, Grade 4: Salary £3,654 to £4,414 per annum inclusive (30 hours pro rata). Reference 493 58.
- Deputy Officer in Charge, Grade 3: Salary £3,172 to £3,936 per annum inclusive (30 hours pro rata). Reference 493 59.
- Residential Social Worker, Grade 1: Salary £2,441 to £3,164 per annum inclusive (30 hours pro rata). Reference 493 58.
- Residential Social Worker, Grade 1: Salary £2,441 to £3,164 per annum inclusive (30 hours pro rata). Reference 493 58.

The Grade 4 post is resident in the office normally responsible for the management of the service. Employment changes are scaled according to accommodation provided.

Application forms from the Director of Social Services, Room 4.202, Town Hall, Exeter, EX1 1PS, Tel: 0392 2424, extension 5350. Please quote relevant reference. Closing date August 25, 1978.

**Ealing**  
London Borough

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